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**THE YALE SHAKESPEARE**

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EDITED BY

**WILBUR L. CROSS      TUCKER BROOKE**  
**WILLARD HIGLEY DURHAM**

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∴ *The Yale Shakespeare* ∴

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THE CHRONICLE HISTORY OF  
THE LIFE AND DEATH OF  
KING LEAR  
AND HIS THREE DAUGHTERS

EDITED BY  
WILLIAM LYON PHELPS



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*Here Love the slain with Love the slayer lies;  
Deep drown'd are both in the same sunless pool.  
Up from its depths that mirror thundering skies  
Bubbles the wan mirth of the mirthless Fool.*

—WILLIAM WATSON



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*The facsimile opposite represents the title-page of the Elizabethan Club copy of the spurious "1608" quarto. Though purporting to belong to that year, this edition is now known to be an interesting forgery, executed about 1619. A discussion of the relation between this and the genuine 1608 quarto, together with the imprint of the latter, will be found on p. 143. Of the spurious edition, some twenty-eight copies are known to survive; of the genuine, ten.*

**M. VVilliam Shake-speare,**  
*HIS*  
**True Chronicle History of the life**  
**and death of King Lear, and his**  
*three Daughters.*

*With the unfortunate life of EDGAR,*  
*sonne and heire to the Earle of Glocester, and*  
*his sullen and assumed humour of TOM*  
*of Bedlam.*

*As it was plaid before the Kings Maiessty at White-Hall, the*  
*pen S. Stephens night, in Christmas Hollidaies.*

**By his Maiesties Seruants, playing vsually at the**  
*Globe on the Banck-side.*



**Printed for Nathaniel Butters,**  
**1608.**



[DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

LEAR, *King of Britain*

KING OF FRANCE *M. Cordelia*

DUKE OF BURGUNDY

DUKE OF CORNWALL *Regan*

DUKE OF ALBANY *Goneril*

EARL OF KENT

EARL OF GLOUCESTER

EDGAR, *Son to Gloucester*

EDMUND, *Bastard Son to Gloucester*

CURAN, *a Courtier*

OSWALD, *Steward to Goneril*

Old Man, *Tenant to Gloucester*

Doctor

Fool

A Captain, employed by Edmund

A Gentleman, Attendant on Cordelia

A Herald

Servants to Cornwall

GONERIL,  
REGAN,  
CORDELIA, } *Daughters to Lear*

Knights of Lear's Train, Officers, Messengers, Soldiers, and Attendants

SCENE: *Britain.*]

# The Tragedy of King Lear

## ACT FIRST

### Scene One

[King Lear's Palace]

Enter Kent, Gloucester, and Edmund.

Kent. I thought the king had more affected the Duke of Albany than Cornwall.

Glo. It did always seem so to us; but now, in the division of the kingdom, it appears not which of the dukes he values most; for equalities are so weighed that curiosity in neither can make choice of either's moiety.

Kent. Is not this your son, my lord? 8

Glo. His breeding, sir, hath been at my charge: I have so often blushed to acknowledge him, that now I am brazed to it.

Kent. I cannot conceive you. 12

Glo. Sir, this young fellow's mother could; whereupon she grew round-wombed, and had, indeed, sir, a son for her cradle ere she had a husband for her bed. Do you smell a fault? 16

Kent. I cannot wish the fault undone, the issue of it being so proper.

Glo. But I have a son, sir, by order of law, some year elder than this, who yet is no dearer

1 affected: loved  
7 moiety: share  
18 proper: handsome

6 curiosity: scrupulous examination  
11 brazed: hardened  
20 some year: about a year

in my account: though this knave came somewhat saucily into the world before he was sent for, yet was his mother fair; there was good sport at his making, and the whoreson must be acknowledged. Do you know this noble gentleman, Edmund? 26

*Edm.* No, my lord.

*Glo.* My Lord of Kent: remember him hereafter as my honourable friend.

*Edm.* My services to your lordship.

*Kent.* I must love you, and sue to know you better. 32

*Edm.* Sir, I shall study deserving.

*Glo.* He hath been out nine years, and away he shall again. The king is coming.

*Sennet.* Enter King Lear, Cornwall, Albany, Goneril, Regan, Cordelia, and Attendants.

*Lear.* Attend the Lords of France and Burgundy, Gloucester. 36

*Glo.* I shall, my liege. *Exit [with Edmund.]*

*Lear.* Meantime we shall express our darker purpose.

Give me the map there. Know that we have divided In three our kingdom; and 'tis our fast intent To shake all cares and business from our age, 41  
Conferring them on younger strengths, while we Unburden'd crawl toward death. Our son of Cornwall,

And you, our no less loving son of Albany, 44  
We have this hour a constant will to publish Our daughters' several dowers, that future strife

31 sue: beg

34 out: out of the kingdom

38 darker: more secret

33 study deserving: try to be worthy

35 S. d. Sennet: notes on a trumpet

40 fast intent: fixed purpose

May be prevented now. The princes, France and  
 Burgundy,  
 Great rivals in our <sup>Cornelia</sup> youngest daughter's love, 48  
 Long in our court have made their amorous sojourn,  
 And here are to be answer'd. Tell me, my daughters,—

Since now we will divest us both of rule,  
 Interest of territory, cares of state.— 52  
 Which of you shall we say doth love us most?  
 That we our largest bounty may extend  
 Where nature doth with merit challenge. Goneril,  
 Our eldest-born, speak first. 58

Gon. Sir, I love you more than words can wield  
 the matter;

Dearer than eye-sight, space, and liberty;  
 Beyond what can be valu'd rich or rare;  
 No less than life, with grace, health, beauty,  
 honour; 60

As much as child e'er lov'd, or father found;  
 A love that makes breath poor and speech unable; ← HE IS  
 Beyond all manner of so much I love you. ← GONERIL

Cor. [*Aside.*] What shall Cordelia do? Love and  
 be silent. 64

Lear. Of all these bounds, even from this line to  
 this,

With shadowy forests and with champains rich'd,  
 With plenteous rivers and wide-skirted meads,  
 We make thee lady: to thine and Albany's issue  
 Be this perpetual. What says our second daughter, 69  
 Our dearest Regan, wife to Cornwall? Speak.

Reg. I am made of that self metal as my sister,  
 And prize me at her worth. In my true heart

47 prevented: forestalled 52 Interest: legal title 55 nature; cf. n.  
 58 space: the external world 62 unable: impotent 71 self: same

Re Gon / Goneril / Cor.

I find she names my very deed of love, 73  
 Only she comes too short: that I profess  
 Myself an enemy to all other joys  
 Which the most precious square of sense possesses 76  
 And find I am alone felicitate  
 In your dear highness' love.

Cor. [Aside.] Then, poor Cordelia!  
 And yet not so; since, I am sure, my love's  
 More richer than my tongue. 80

Lear. To thee and thine, hereditary ever,  
 Remain this ample third of our fair kingdom,  
 No less in space, validity, and pleasure,  
 Than that conferr'd on Goneril. Now, our joy, 84  
 Although our last, not least; to whose young love  
 The vines of France and milk of Burgundy  
 Strive to be interest'd; what can you say to draw  
 A third more opulent than your sisters? Speak.

Cor. Nothing, my lord. 89

Lear. Nothing?

Cor. Nothing.

Lear. Nothing will come of nothing: speak  
 again. *See i. w. 146* 92

Cor. Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave  
My heart into my mouth: I love your majesty  
According to my bond; nor more nor less.

Lear. How, how, Cordelia! mend your speech a  
 little, 96  
 Lest you may mar your fortunes.

Cor. Good my lord,  
 You have begot me, bred me, lov'd me: I  
 Return those duties back as are right fit,  
 Obey you, love you, and most honour you. 100

76 square; cf. n.

83 validity: *value*

87 interest'd: *given a share*

77 felicitate: *made happy*

86 milk: *pasture land*

95 bond: *obligation of duty*

~~Why have my sisters husbands, if they say  
They love you all? Haply, when I shall wed,  
That lord whose hand must take my plight shall  
carry~~ *Complete*

Half my love with him, half my care and duty:  
Sure I shall never marry like my sisters, 105  
To love my father all.

*Lear.* But goes thy heart with this?

*Cor.* Ay, good my lord.

*Lear.* So young, and so untender? 108

*Cor.* So young, my lord, and true.

*Lear.* Let it be so; thy truth then be thy dower:

For, by the sacred radiance of the sun,  
The mysteries of Hecate and the night, } 112  
By all the operation of the orbs } *Pagan*  
From whom we do exist and cease to be,

Here I disclaim all my paternal care,  
Propinquity and property of blood, 116

And as a stranger to my heart and me  
Hold thee from this for ever. The barbarous  
Scythian,

Or he that makes his generation messes  
To gorge his appetite, shall to my bosom 120

Be as well neighbour'd, pitied, and reliev'd,  
As thou my sometime daughter.

*Kent.* Good my liege,—

*Lear.* Peace, Kent!

Come not between the dragon and his wrath, } 124  
I lov'd her most, and thought to set my rest

On her kind nursery. Hence, and avoid my sight!  
So be my grave my peace, as here I give

103 plight: *pledge*

112 Hecate: *goddess of witchcraft*

113 operation: *planetary influence*

116 property of blood: *kinship*

119 generation: *children*

125 set my rest: *stake my all (figure from a game)*

126 nursery: *nursing*

Her father's heart from her! Call France. Who  
stirs? 128

Call Burgundy. Cornwall and Albany,  
With my two daughters' dowers digest the third;  
Let pride, which she calls plainness, marry her.

I do invest you jointly with my power, 132

Pre-eminence, and all the large effects  
That troop with majesty. Ourselves by monthly course,

With reservation of a hundred knights,

By you to be sustain'd, shall our abode 136

Make with you by due turn. Only we shall retain

The name and all th' addition to a king;

The sway, revenue, execution of the rest,

Beloved sons, be yours: which to confirm, 140

This coronet part between you.

*Kent.*

Royal Lear,

Whom I have ever honour'd as my king,

Lov'd as my father, as my master follow'd,

As my great patron thought on in my prayers,—

*Lear.* The bow is bent and drawn; make from the  
shaft. 145

*Kent.* Let it fall rather, though the fork invade  
The region of my heart: be Kent unmannerly

When Lear is mad. What wouldst thou do, old  
man? 148

Think'st thou that duty shall have dread to speak  
When power to flattery bows? To plainness honour's  
bound

When majesty falls to folly. Reserve thy state;  
And, in thy best consideration, check 152

This hideous rashness: answer my life my judgment,

130 digest: *assimilate*

133 effects: *outward marks of royalty*

134 troop with: *follow in the train of*

138 addition: *title, marks of distinction*

131 marry: *find a husband*

151 state; *cf. n.*

Thy youngest daughter does not love thee least;  
Nor are those empty-hearted whose low sound  
Reverbs no hollowness.

Lear. Kent, on thy life, no more.

Kent. My life I never held but as a pawn 157  
To wage against thine enemies; nor fear to lose it,  
Thy safety being the motive.

Lear. Out of my sight!

Kent. See better, Lear; and let me still remain 160  
The true blank of thine eye.

Lear. Now, by Apollo,—

Kent. Now, by Apolle, king,  
Thou swear'st thy gods in vain.

Lear. O vassal! miscreant!  
[Laying his hand on his sword.]

Alb. } Dear sir, forbear. 164  
Corn. }

Kent. Do;  
Kill thy physician, and the fee bestow  
Upon the foul disease. Revoke thy gift;  
Or, whilst I can vent clamour from my throat,  
I'll tell thee thou dost evil.

Lear. Hear me, recreant! 169  
On thine allegiance, hear me!

Since thou hast sought to make us break our vow,—  
Which we durst never yet,—and, with strain'd  
pride 172

To come betwixt our sentence and our power,—  
Which nor our nature nor our place can bear,—  
Our potency made good, take thy reward.  
Five days we do allot thee for provision 176

156 Reverbs: re-echoes      158 wage: stake      160 still: always  
161 blank: white spot in centre of target  
175 made good: proved by this decree

4-26  
3-2-48-9  
3-4-2-3  
1-4-2-48-9  
1-5-35  
4-6-15  
4-7-15  
norm. to order  
approximate  
instructions



To shield thee from diseases of the world;  
 And, on the sixth, to turn thy hated back  
 Upon our kingdom: if, on the tenth day following  
 Thy banish'd trunk be found in our dominions,  
 The moment is thy death. Away! By Jupiter,  
 This shall not be revok'd. 182

*Kent.* Fare thee well, king; sith thus thou wilt  
 appear,

Freedom lives hence, and banishment is here.

[*To Cordelia.*] The gods to their dear shelter take  
 thee, maid, 185

That justly think'st, and hast most rightly said!

[*To Regan and Goneril.*] And your large speeches  
 may your deeds approve,

That good effects may spring from words of love. 188

Thus Kent, O princes! bids you all adieu;

He'll shape his old course in a country new. *Exit.*

*Flourish. Enter Gloucester with France, and  
 Burgundy, Attendants.*

*Glo.* Here's France and Burgundy, my noble lord.

*Lear.* My Lord of Burgundy, 192

We first address toward you, who with this king  
 Hath rivall'd for our daughter. What, in the least,  
 Will you require in present dower with her,  
 Or cease your quest of love?

*Bur.* Most royal majesty, 196

I crave no more than hath your highness offer'd,  
 Nor will you tender less.

*Lear.* Right noble Burgundy,

When she was dear to us we did hold her so,  
 But now her price is fall'n. Sir, there she stands: 200

177 diseases: *slight vexations, dis-eases*

187 approve: *make good*

S. d. Flourish: *music of horns*

194 in the least: *at least*

183 sith: *since*

190 course; *cf. n.*

198 tender: *offer*

If aught within that little-seeming substance,  
Or all of it, with our displeasure piec'd,  
And nothing more, may fitly like your Grace,  
She's there, and she is yours.

*Bur.* I know no answer. 204

*Lear.* Will you, with those infirmities she owes,  
Unfriended, new-adopted to our hate,  
Dower'd with our curse, and stranger'd with our oath,  
Take her, or leave her?

*Bur.* Pardon me, royal sir; 208  
Election makes not up on such conditions.

*Lear.* Then leave her, sir; for, by the power that  
made me,  
I tell you all her wealth.—[*To France.*] For you,  
great king,  
I would not from your love make such a stray  
To match you where I hate; therefore, beseech  
you 218

To avert your liking a more worthier way  
Than on a wretch whom nature is asham'd  
Almost to acknowledge hers.

*France.* This is most strange, 216  
That she, who even but now was your best object,  
The argument of your praise, balm of your age,  
The best, the dearest, should in this trice of time  
Commit a thing so monstrous, to dismantle 220  
So many folds of favour. Sure, her offence  
Must be of such unnatural degree 2. 4. 181  
That monsters it, or your fore-vouch'd affection  
Fall into taint; which to believe of her, 224  
Must be a faith that reason without miracle  
Could never plant in me.

205 owes: *owns*  
218 argument: *subject*  
223 monsters: *makes monstrous*

209 Election, etc.: *I cannot choose*  
219 trice: *moment*

*Cor.* I yet beseech your majesty—  
 If for I want that glib and oily art  
 To speak and purpose not; since what I well  
 intend, 228

I'll do 't before I speak—that you make known  
It is no vicious blot nor other foulness,  
 No unchaste action, or dishonour'd step,  
 That hath depriv'd me of your grace and favour,  
 But even for want of that for which I am richer,  
 A still-soliciting eye, and such a tongue  
 That I am glad I have not, though not to have it  
 Hath lost me in your liking.

*Lear.* Better thou 236  
 Hadst not been born than not to have pleas'd me  
 better.

*France.* Is it but this? a tardiness in nature  
 Which often leaves the history unspoke  
 That it intends to do? My Lord of Burgundy,  
 What say you to the lady? Love is not love 241  
 When it is mingled with regards that stand  
 Aloof from the entire point. Will you have her?  
She is herself a dowry.

*Bur.* Royal Lear, 244  
 Give but that portion which yourself propos'd,  
 And here I take Cordelia by the hand,  
 Duchess of Burgundy.

*Lear.* Nothing: I have sworn; I am firm. 248

*Bur.* I am sorry, then, you have so lost a father  
 That you must lose a husband.

*Cor.* Peace be with Burgundy!  
 Since that respects of fortune are his love,  
 I shall not be his wife. 252

228 speak and purpose not: *speak deceitfully*

251 respects: *considerations*

France. Fairest Cordelia, that art most rich, being  
poor;

Most choice, forsaken; and most lov'd, despis'd!  
Thee and thy virtues here I seize upon:  
Be it lawful I take up what's cast away. 256

Gods, gods! 'tis strange that from their cold'st neglect  
My love should kindle to inflam'd respect.

Thy dowerless daughter, king, thrown to my chance,  
Is queen of us, of ours, and our fair France: 260

Not all the dukes of waterish Burgundy  
Shall buy this unpriz'd precious maid of me.  
Bid them farewell, Cordelia, though unkind:  
Thou lovest here, a better where to find. 264

Lear. Thou hast her, France; let her be thine,  
for we

Have no such daughter, nor shall ever see  
That face of hers again, therefore be gone —  
Without our grace, our love, our benison. 268  
Come, noble Burgundy.

*Flourish. Exeunt [Lear, Burgundy, Cornwall,  
Albany, Gloucester, and Attendants.]*

France. Bid farewell to your sisters.

Cor. The jewels of our father, with wash'd eyes  
Cordelia leaves you: I know you what you are; 272  
And like a sister am most loath to call  
Your faults as they are nam'd. Use well our father:  
To your professed bosoms I commit him:  
But yet, alas! stood I within his grace, 276  
I would prefer him to a better place.  
So farewell to you both.

Reg. Prescribe not us our duties.

262 unpriz'd: *invaluable* (?)  
264 a better where: *a better place*  
271 wash'd; *cf. s.*

263 unkind: *unnatural*  
268 benison: *blessing*  
275 bosoms: *affections*

*Gon.* Let your study  
Be to content your lord, who hath receiv'd you  
At fortune's alms; you have obedience scanted,  
And well are worth the want that you have wanted. 282

*Cor.* Time shall unfold what plighted cunning  
hides;

Who covers faults, at last shame them derides.  
Well may you prosper!

*France* Come, my fair Cordelia.

*Exit France and Cordelia.*

*Gon.* Sister, it is not little I have to say of  
what most nearly appertains to us both. I think  
our father will hence to-night. 288

*Reg.* That's most certain, and with you;  
next month with us.

*Gon.* You see how full of changes his age is;  
the observation we have made of it hath not  
been little: he always loved our sister most; and  
with what poor judgment he hath now cast her  
off appears too grossly.

*Reg.* 'Tis the infirmity of his age; yet he  
hath ever but slenderly known himself. 297

*Gon.* The best and soundest of his time hath  
been but rash; then, must we look to receive  
from his age, not alone the imperfections of  
long-engrafted condition, but, therewithal the  
unruly waywardness that infirm and choleric  
years bring with them. 303

*Reg.* Such unconstant starts are we like to  
have from him as this of Kent's banishment.

*Gon.* ~~There is further compliment of leave-  
taking between France and him.~~ Pray you, let

282 want; cf. n.

298 time: years

304 starts: fits of temper

283 plighted: folded

301 engrafted condition: implanted temperament

295 grossly: obviously

306 compliment of: ceremonious

us hit together: if our father carry authority  
with such dispositions as he bears, this last  
surrender of his will but offend us. 310

*Reg.* We shall further think on't.

*Gon.* We must do something, and i' the heat.

*Exeunt.*

Scene Two

[*Earl of Gloucester's Castle*]

*Enter Bastard* [*Edmund, with a letter.*]

*Edm.* Thou, Nature, art my goddess; to thy law  
My services are bound. Wherefore should I  
Stand in the plague of custom, and permit  
The curiosity of nations to deprive me, 4  
For that I am some twelve or fourteen moonshines  
Lag of a brother? Why bastard? wherefore base?  
When my dimensions are as well compact,  
My mind as generous, and my shape as true, 8  
As honest madam's issue? Why brand they us  
With base? with baseness? bastardy? base, base?  
Who in the lusty stealth of nature take  
More composition and fierce quality 12  
Than doth, within a dull, stale, tired bed,  
Go to the creating a whole tribe of fops,  
Got 'tween asleep and wake? Well then,  
Legitimate Edgar, I must have your land: 16  
Our father's love is to the bastard Edmund  
As to the legitimate. Fine word, 'legitimate!'  
Well, my legitimate, if this letter speed,  
And my invention thrive, Edmund the base 20

308 hit: agree

4 curiosity: pedantry

14 fops: fools

310 offend: harm

3 plague: snare

6 Lag of: behind

19 speed: succeed

Shall top the legitimate:—I grow, I prosper;  
Now, gods, stand up for bastards!

*Enter Gloucester.*

*Glo.* Kent banished thus! And France in choler parted!

And the king gone to-night! subscrib'd his power! 24  
 Confm'd to exhibition! All this done

Upon the gad! Edmund, how now! what news?

*Edm.* So please your lordship, none.

[*Putting up the letter.*]

*Glo.* Why so earnestly seek you to put up  
 that letter? 29

*Edm.* I know no news, my lord.

*Glo.* What paper were you reading?

*Edm.* Nothing, my lord. 32

*Glo.* No? What needed then that terrible  
 dispatch of it into your pocket? the quality of  
 nothing hath not such need to hide itself. Let's  
 see; come; if it be nothing, I shall not need  
 spectacles. 37

*Edm.* I beseech you, sir, pardon me; it is a  
 letter from my brother that I have not all o'er-  
 read, and for so much as I have perused, I find  
 it not fit for your o'er-looking. 41

*Glo.* Give me the letter, sir.

*Edm.* I shall offend, either to detain or give  
 it. The contents, as in part I understand them,  
 are to blame. 45

*Glo.* Let's see, let's see.

*Edm.* I hope, for my brother's justification,  
 he wrote this but as an essay or taste of my  
 virtue. 49

24 subscrib'd: *transferred*  
 26 gad: *spur*

25 exhibition: *allowance, maintenance*  
 48 essay: *trial*

*Glo.* "This policy and reverence of age makes the world bitter to the best of our times; keeps our fortunes from us till our oldness cannot relish them. I begin to find an idle and fond bondage in the oppression of aged tyranny, who sways, not as it hath power, but as it is suffered. Come to me, that of this I may speak more. If our father would sleep till I waked him, you should enjoy half his revenue for ever, and live the beloved of your brother, EDGAR."—Hum! Conspiracy! 'Sleep till I waked him, you should enjoy half his revenue.'—My son Edgar! Had he a hand to write this? a heart and brain to breed it in? When came this to you? Who brought it?

64

*Edm.* It was not brought me, my lord; there's the cunning of it; I found it thrown in at the casement of my closet.

*Glo.* You know the character to be your brother's?

69

*Edm.* If the matter were good, my lord, I durst swear it were his; but, in respect of that, I would fain think it were not.

72

*Glo.* It is his.

*Edm.* It is his hand, my lord; but I hope his heart is not in the contents.

*Glo.* Hath he never heretofore sounded you in this business?

77

*Edm.* Never, my lord: but I have often heard him maintain it to be fit that, sons at perfect age, and fathers declined, the father should be

50 policy and reverence of: *policy of revering*53 fond: *foolish*68 character: *handwriting*67 closet: *room*72 fain: *gladly*



as ward to the son, and the son manage his revenue. 82

*Glo.* O villain, villain! His very opinion in the letter! Abhorred villain! ~~Unnatural detested~~, brutish villain! ~~worse than brutish!~~ Go, sirrah, seek him; I'll apprehend him. Abominable villain! Where is he? 87

*Edm.* I do not well know, my lord. If it shall please you to suspend your indignation against my brother till you can derive from him better testimony of his intent, you shall run a certain course; where, if you violently proceed against him, mistaking his purpose, it would make a great gap in your own honour, and shake in pieces the heart of his obedience. I dare pawn down my life for him, that he hath writ this to feel my affection to your honour, and to no other pretence of danger. 98

*Glo.* Think you so?

*Edm.* If your honour judge it meet, I will place you where you shall hear us confer of this, and by an auricular assurance have your satisfaction; and that without any further delay than this very evening. 104

*Glo.* He cannot be such a monster—

[*Edm.* Nor is not, sure.]

*Glo.*—to his father, that so tenderly and entirely loves him. Heaven and earth!] Edmund, seek him out; wind me into him, I pray you: frame the business after your own wisdom. I would unstate myself to be in a due resolution.

84 detested: *detestable*

109 wind me into him; *cf. n.*

111 unstate myself: *give all I am and have certainty*

98 pretence: *intention*

due resolution: *proper*

*Edm.* I will seek him, sir, presently; convey the business as I shall find means, and acquaint you withal. 114

*Glo.* These late eclipses in the sun and moon portend no good to us: though the wisdom of nature can reason it thus ~~and thus~~, yet nature finds itself scourged by the sequent effects. Love cools, friendship falls off, brothers divide: in cities, mutinies; in countries, discord; in palaces, treason; and the bond cracked between son and father. This villain of mine comes under the prediction; there's son against father: the king falls from bias of nature, there's father against child. We have seen the best of our time: machinations, hollowness, treachery, and all ruinous disorders, follow us disquietly to our graves. Find out this villain, Edmund; it shall lose thee nothing: do it carefully. And the noble and true-hearted Kent banished! his offence, honesty! 'Tis strange! *Exit.*

*Edm.* This is the excellent foppery of the world, that, when we are sick in fortune,—often the surfeit of our own behaviour,—we make guilty of our disasters the sun, the moon, and the stars; as if we were villains by necessity, fools by heavenly compulsion, knaves, thieves, and treachers by spherical predominance, drunkards, liars, and adulterers by an enforced obedience of planetary influence; and all that we are evil in, by a divine thrusting on: an admirable evasion of whoremaster man, to lay

112 presently: *instantly*116 wisdom of nature: *natural philosophy*132 excellent foppery: *exceeding folly*138 spherical: *planetary*114 withal: *therewith*141 thrusting on: *impulsion*

his goatish disposition to the charge of a star! My father compounded with my mother under the dragon's tail, and my nativity was under *ursa major*; so that it follows I am rough and lecherous. 'Sfoot! I should have been that I am had the maidenliest star in the firmament twinkled on my bastardizing. Edgar— 149

*Enter Edgar.*

and pat he comes, like the catastrophe of the old comedy: my cue is villainous melancholy, with a sigh like Tom o' Bedlam. O, these eclipses do portend these divisions! *Fa, sol, la, mi.*

*Edg.* How now, brother Edmund! What serious contemplation are you in? 156

*Edm.* I am thinking, brother, of a prediction I read this other day, what should follow these eclipses.

*Edg.* Do you busy yourself with that? 160

*Edm.* I promise you the effects he writes of succeed unhappily; [as of unnaturalness between the child and the parent; death, dearth, dissolutions of ancient amities; divisions in state; menaces and maledictions against king and nobles; needless diffidences, banishment of friends, dissipation of cohorts, nuptial breaches, and I know not what. 168

*Edg.* How long have you been a sectary astronomical?

*Edm.* Come, come;] when saw you my father last? 172

145 dragon's tail; cf. n.

153 *Fa*; cf. n.

169 sectary astronomical: member of the astronomical sect

147 'Sfoot: God's foot!

166 diffidences: suspicions

ok. 3. 3. 1. 12  
9. 3. 7

ok.  
2-152  
2-186  
2-259  
4-2.  
32  
4-6  
2-1-  
2-2

*Edg.* The night gone by.

*Edm.* Spake you with him?

*Edg.* Ay, two hours together.

*Edm.* Parted you in good terms? Found you no displeasure in him by word or countenance?

*Edg.* None at all. 179

*Edm.* Bethink yourself wherein you may have offended him; and at my entreaty forbear his presence till some little time hath qualified the heat of his displeasure, which at this instant so rageth in him that with the mischief of your person it would scarcely allay. 185

*Edg.* Some villain hath done me wrong.

*Edm.* That's my fear. I pray you have a continent forbearance till the speed of his rage goes slower, and, as I say, retire with me to my lodging, from whence I will fitly bring you to hear my lord speak. Pray you, go; there's my key. If you do stir abroad, go armed. 192

*Edg.* Armed, brother!

*Edm.* Brother, I advise you to the best; go armed; I am no honest man if there be any good meaning toward you; I have told you what I have seen and heard; but faintly, nothing like the image and horror of it; pray you, away.

*Edg.* Shall I hear from you anon?

*Edm.* I do serve you in this business. 200

*Exit [Edgar.]*

A credulous father, and a brother noble,  
Whose nature is so far from doing harms  
That he suspects none; on whose foolish honesty

184 mischief: *harm*  
198 image and horror: *horrible image*

188 continent: *temperate*

My practices ride easy! I see the business. 204

Let me, if not by birth, have lands by wit:

All with me 's meet that I can fashion fit. *Exit.*

Scene Three

[*Duke of Albany's Palace*]

*Enter Goneril, and [Oswald her] Steward.*

*Gon.* Did my father strike my gentleman for chiding of his fool?

*Osw.* Ay, madam.

*Gon.* By day and night he wrongs me; every hour <sup>He hit her servant</sup> ~~not~~ <sub>ice.</sub>

He flashes into one gross crime or other,

That sets us all at odds: I'll not endure it:

His knights grow riotous, and himself upbraids us

On every trifle. When he returns from hunting

I will not speak with him; say I am sick: 9

If you come slack of former services,

You shall do well; the fault of it I'll answer.

*Osw.* He's coming, madam; I hear him. 12

[*Horns within.*]

*Gon.* Put on what weary negligence you please,

You and your fellows; I'd have it come to question:

If he distaste it, let him to my sister,

Whose mind and mine, I know, in that are one, 16

[Not to be over-rul'd. Idle old man,

That still would manage those authorities

That he hath given away! Now, by my life,

Old fools are babes again, and must be us'd. 20

With checks as flatteries, when they are seen abus'd.]

Remember what I have said.

*Osw.*

Well, madam.

204 practices: *treacherous plots*

17 Idle: *foolish*

21 abus'd; *cf. n.*

14 question: *discussion*

22 Well: *like French 'bien'*

Gon. And let his knights have colder looks among  
 you;  
 What grows of it, no matter; advise your fellows  
 so: 24  
 I would breed from hence occasions, and I shall,  
 That I may speak: I'll write straight to my sister  
 To hold my very course. Prepare for dinner.  
 [Exeunt.]

## Scene Four

[The same]

*Enter Kent [disguised.]*

Kent. If but as well I other accents borrow,  
 That can my speech diffuse, my good intent  
 May carry through itself to that full issue  
 For which I raz'd my likeness. Now, banish'd  
 Kent, 4  
 If thou canst serve where thou dost stand condemn'd,  
 So may it come, thy master, whom thou lov'st,  
 Shall find thee full of labours.

*Horns within. Enter Lear, [Knights,] and  
 Attendants.*

Lear. Let me not stay a jot for dinner: go,  
 get it ready. [Exit an Attendant.] How now!  
 what art thou? 10

Kent. A man, sir.

Lear. What dost thou profess? What wouldst  
 thou with us?

Kent. I do profess to be no less than I seem;  
 to serve him truly that will put me in trust; to

2 diffuse: *disguise*    3 carry through: *accomplish*    issue: *conclusion*  
 4 raz'd: *erased*    12 dost . . . profess: *is thy profession*

love him that is honest; to converse with him that is wise, and says little; to fear judgment; to fight when I cannot choose; and to eat no fish.

*Lear.* What art thou? 19

*Kent.* A very honest-hearted fellow, and as poor as the king.

*Lear.* If thou be as poor for a subject as he is for a king, thou art poor enough. What wouldst thou? 24

*Kent.* Service.

*Lear.* Whom wouldst thou serve?

*Kent.* You.

*Lear.* Dost thou know me, fellow? 28

*Kent.* No, sir; but you have that in your countenance which I would fain call master.

*Lear.* What's that?

*Kent.* Authority. 32

*Lear.* What services canst thou do?

*Kent.* I can keep honest counsel, ride, run, mar a curious tale in telling it, and deliver a plain message bluntly; that which ordinary men are fit for, I am qualified in, and the best of me is diligence. 38

*Lear.* How old art thou?

*Kent.* Not so young, sir, to love a woman for singing, nor so old to dote on her for any thing; I have years on my back forty-eight. 42

*Lear.* Follow me; thou shalt serve me: if I like thee no worse after dinner I will not part from thee yet. Dinner, ho! dinner! Where's my knave? my fool? Go you and call my fool hither. [Exit an Attendant.]

*Enter Steward [Oswald.]*

You, you, sirrah, where's my daughter? 48

Osw. So please you,— [Exit.]

Lear. What says the fellow there? Call the  
clotpoll back. [Exit a Knight.] Where's my  
fool, ho? I think the world's asleep. How now!  
where's that mongrel? 53

[Re-enter Knight.]

Knight. He says, my lord, your daughter is  
not well.

Lear. Why came not the slave back to me  
when I called him? 57

Knight. Sir, he answered me in the roundest  
manner, he would not.

Lear. He would not! 60

Knight. My lord, I know not what the matter  
is; but, to my judgment, your highness is not  
entertained with that ceremonious affection as  
you were wont; there's a great abatement of  
kindness appears as well in the general de-  
pendants as in the duke himself also and your  
daughter.

Lear. Ha! sayest thou so? 68

Knight. I beseech you, pardon me, my lord,  
if I be mistaken; for my duty cannot be silent  
when I think your highness wronged. 71

Lear. Thou but rememberest me of mine  
own conception: I have perceived a most faint  
neglect of late; which I have rather blamed as  
mine own jealous curiosity than as a very pre-  
tence and purpose of unkindness: I will look  
further into 't. But where's my fool? I have  
not seen him this two days. 75

51 clotpoll: blockhead

75 jealous curiosity: suspicious punctiliousness

When his fool  
is sized by Google  
to be dead.



**Knight.** Since my young lady's going into France, sir, the fool hath much pined him away.

**Lear.** No more of that; I have noted it well. Go you and tell my daughter I would speak with her.

[*Exit an Attendant.*]

Go you, call hither my fool. [*Exit an Attendant.*]

*Enter Steward [Oswald.]*

O! you sir, you, come you hither, sir. Who am I, sir? 86

**Osw.** My lady's father.

**Lear.** 'My lady's father!' my lord's knave: you whoreson dog! you slave! you cur! 89

**Osw.** I am none of these, my lord; I beseech your pardon.

**Lear.** Do you bandy looks with me, you rascal? [*Striking him.*]

**Osw.** I'll not be struck, my lord. 94

**Kent.** Nor tripped neither, you base football player. [*Tripping up his heels.*]

**Lear.** I thank thee, fellow; thou servest me, and I'll love thee. 98

**Kent.** Come, sir, arise, away! I'll teach you differences: away, away! If you will measure your lubber's length again, tarry; but away! Go to! have you wisdom? so.

[*Pushes Oswald out.*]

**Lear.** Now, my friendly knave, I thank thee: there's earnest of thy service. 104

[*Gives Kent money.*]

*Enter Fool.*

92 bandy: an expression from the game of tennis 95 football; cf. n.  
100 differences: disagreements, quibbles 104 earnest: advance wages

*Fool.* Let me hire him too: here's my coxcomb.

*Lear.* How now, my pretty knave! how dost thou? 108

*Fool.* Sirrah, you were best take my coxcomb.

*Kent.* Why, fool?

*Fool.* Why? for taking one's part that's out of favour. Nay, an thou canst not smile as the wind sits, thou'lt catch cold shortly: there, take my coxcomb. Why, this fellow has banished two on's daughters, and did the third a blessing against his will: if thou follow him thou must needs wear my coxcomb. How now, nuncle! Would I had two coxcombs and two daughters!

Kent  
becoming  
fool

*Lear.* Why, my boy? 119

*Fool.* If I gave them all my living, I'd keep my coxcombs myself. There's mine; beg another of thy daughters.

*Lear.* Take heed, sirrah; the whip. 123

*Fool.* Truth's a dog must to kennel; he must be whipped out when Lady the brach may stand by the fire and stink.

*Lear.* A pestilent gall to me!

*Fool.* Sirrah, I'll teach thee a speech. 128

*Lear.* Do.

*Fool.* Mark it, nuncle:—

Have more than thou showest, 132

Speak less than thou knowest,

Lend less than thou owest,

Ride more than thou goest,

Learn more than thou trowest, 136

105 coxcomb: *fool's cap*

117 nuncle: *mine uncle*

127 gall; *cf. n.*

112 an: *if*

115 on's: *of his*

125 brach: *hunting-bitch*

135 goest: *walkest*

136 trowest: *knowest; cf. n.*

Set less than thou throwest;  
 Leave thy drink and thy whore,  
 And keep in-a-door,

No DIFFERENCE → And thou shalt have more 140  
 → Than two tens to a score.

*Kent.* This is nothing, fool.

*Fool.* Then 'tis like the breath of an unfee'd  
 lawyer, you gave me nothing for 't. . . Can you  
 make no use of nothing, nuncle? 145

*Lear.* Why, no, boy; nothing can be made  
 out of nothing.

*Fool.* [To *Kent.*] Prithee, tell him, so much  
 the rent of his land comes to: he will not be-  
 lieve a fool. 150

*Lear.* A bitter fool!

*Fool.* Dost thou know the difference, my boy,  
 between a bitter fool and a sweet fool? 153

*Lear.* No, lad; teach me.

*Fool.* [That lord that counsell'd thee  
 To give away thy land, 156  
 Come place him here by me,

Do thou for him stand:  
 The sweet and bitter fool  
 Will presently appear; 160

The one in motley here,  
 The other found out there.

*Lear.* Dost thou call me fool, boy?

*Fool.* All thy other titles thou hast given  
 away; that thou wast born with. 165

→ *Kent.* (This is not altogether fool) my lord.

*Fool.* No, faith, lords and great men will not  
 let me; if I had a monopoly out, they would

137 Set . . . throwest: *stake less than you throw to win*  
 168 monopoly out; *cf. n.*

have part on 't, and ladies too: they will not let me have all fool to myself; they'll be snatching.] Nuncle, give me an egg, and I'll give thee two crowns. 172

*Lear.* What two crowns shall they be?

*Fool.* Why, after I have cut the egg i' the middle and eat up the meat, the two crowns of the egg. When thou clovest thy crown i' the middle, and gavest away both parts, thou borest thine ass on thy back o'er the dirt: thou hadst little wit in thy bald crown when thou gavest thy golden one away. If I speak like myself in this, let him be whipped that first finds it so. 181

Fools had ne'er less grace in a year;

For wise men are grown foppish,

And know not how their wits to wear, 184

Their manners are so apish.

*Lear.* When were you wont to be so full of songs, sirrah? 187

*Fool.* I have used it, nuncle, ever since thou madest thy daughters thy mothers; for when thou gavest them the rod and puttest down thine own breeches,

Then they for sudden joy did weep, 192

And I for sorrow sung,

That such a king should play bo-peep,

And go the fools among. 195

Prithee, nuncle, keep a schoolmaster that can teach thy fool to lie: I would fain learn to lie.

*Lear.* An you lie, sirrah, we'll have you whipped. 199

*Fool.* I marvel what kin thou and thy daughters are: they'll have me whipped for speaking true, thou'lt have me whipped for

lying; and sometimes I am whipped for holding my peace. I had rather be any kind o' thing than a fool; and yet I would not be thee, nuncle; thou hast pared thy wit o' both sides, and left nothing i' the middle: here comes one o' the parings. 208

*Enter Goneril.*

*Lear.* How now, daughter! what makes that frontlet on? Methinks you are too much of late i' the frown. 211

*Fool.* Thou wast a pretty fellow when thou hadst no need to care for her frowning; now thou art an O without a figure. I am better than thou art now; I am a fool, thou art nothing. [*To Goneril.*] Yes, forsooth, I will hold my tongue; so your face bids me, though you say nothing.

Mum, mum;  
He that keeps nor crust nor crumb, 220  
Weary of all, shall want some.

That's a shealed peascod. [*Pointing to Lear.*]

*Gon.* Not only, sir, this your all-licens'd fool,  
But other of your insolent retinue 224  
Do hourly carp and quarrel, breaking forth  
In rank and not-to-be-endured riots. Sir,  
I had thought, by making this well known unto you,  
To have found a safe redress; but now grow  
fearful, 228

By what yourself too late have spoke and done,  
That you protect this course, and put it on

210 frontlet: *forehead-band*, i.e., *frown*

214 an O without a figure: *a mere cipher*

222 shealed peascod: *empty peapod*

230 protect: *authorize* put . . . on: *encourage*

By your allowance; which if you should, the fault  
 Would not 'scape censure, nor the redresses sleep, 232  
 Which, in the tender of a wholesome weal,  
 Might in their working do you that offence,  
 Which else were shame, that then necessity  
 Will call discreet proceeding. 236

*Fool.* For you trow, nuncle,  
 The hedge-sparrow fed the cuckoo so long,  
 That it had it head bit off by it young.

So out went the candle, and we were left darkling. 240

*Lear.* Are you our daughter?

*Gon.* I would you would make use of your good  
 wisdom,

Whereof I know you are fraught; and put away  
 These dispositions which of late transform you  
 From what you rightly are. 245

*Fool.* May not an ass know when the cart  
 draws the horse? Whoop, Jug! I love thee.

*Lear.* Does any here know me? This is not

*Lear:* 248

Does Lear walk thus? speak thus? Where are his  
 eyes?

Either his notion weakens, his discernings  
 Are lethargied. Ha! waking? 'tis not so.

Who is it that can tell me who I am? 252

*Fool.* Lear's shadow.

[*Lear.* I would learn that; for, by the marks  
 of sovereignty, knowledge and reason, I should  
 be false persuaded I had daughters. 256

*Fool.* Which they will make an obedient  
 father.]

*Lear.* Your name, fair gentlewoman?

231 allowance: approval 233 tender: care

239 it: its 240 darkling: in the dark

247 Jug; cf. n. 250 notion: understanding

weal: commonwealth

243 fraught: stored

257 Which they: who

*Gon.* This admiration, sir, is much o' the favour 260  
 Of other your new pranks. I do beseech you  
 To understand my purposes aright:  
 As you are old and reverend, should be wise.  
 Here do you keep a hundred knights and squires; 264  
 Men so disorder'd, so debosh'd, and bold,  
 That this our court, infected with their manners,  
 Shows like a riotous inn: epicurism and lust  
 Make it more like a tavern or a brothel 268  
 Than a grac'd palace. The shame itself doth speak  
 For instant remedy; be then desir'd,  
 By her that else will take the thing she begs,  
 A little to disquantity your train; 272  
 And the remainder, that shall still depend,  
 To be such men as may besort your age,  
 Which know themselves and you.

*Lear.* Darkness and devils!  
 Saddle my horses; call my train together. 276  
 Degenerate bastard! I'll not trouble thee:  
 Yet have I left a daughter.

*Gon.* You strike my people, and your disorder'd  
 rabble  
 Make servants of their betters. 280

*Enter Albany.*

*Lear.* Woe, that too late repents;  
 [To Albany.] O! sir, are you come?  
 Is it your will? Speak, sir. Prepare my horses.  
Ingratitude, thou marble-hearted fiend,  
(More hideous, when thou show'st thee in a child,  
Than the sea-monster.

260 admiration: *sign of wonder*

265 disorder'd: *disorderly* debosh'd: *debauched*

272 disquantity: *reduce*

273 depend: *remain dependants*

274 besort: *befit*

What did Gon. say!

Alb. Pray, sir, be patient. 285

Lear. [To Goneril.] Deteste kite thou liest:  
 My train are men of choice and rarest parts,  
 That all particulars of duty know, 288  
 And in the most exact regard support  
 The worships of their name. O most small fault,  
How ugly didst thou in Cordelia show!  
 Which, like an engine, wrench'd my frame of  
 nature. 292  
 From the fix'd place, drew from my heart all love,  
 And added to the gall. O Lear, Lear, Lear!  
 Beat at this gate, that let thy folly in, 295

[Striking his head.]

And thy dear judgment out! Go, go, my people.

Alb. My lord, I am guiltless, as I am ignorant  
 Of what hath mov'd you.

Lear. It may be so, my lord.  
 Hear, Nature, hear! dear goddess, hear!  
 Suspend thy purpose, if thou didst intend 300  
 To make this creature fruitful! ←  
 Into her womb convey sterility!

Dry up in her the organs of increase,  
 And from her derogate body never spring 304  
 A babe to honour her! If she must teem,  
 Create her child of spleen, that it may live }  
And be a thwart disnatur'd torment to her! }  
 Let it stamp wrinkles in her brow of youth,  
 With cadent tears fret channels in her cheeks,  
 Turn all her mother's pains and benefits  
 To laughter and contempt, that she may feel  
 How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is 312  
To have a thankless child! Away, away! Exit.

290 worships: dignity 292 engine: the rack 304 derogate: degraded  
 307 thwart: perverted disnatur'd: unnatural 309 cadent: falling



*Alb.* Now, gods that we adore, whereof comes this?

*Gon.* Never afflict yourself to know the cause;  
But let his disposition have that scope 318  
That dotage gives it.

*Enter Lear.*

*Lear.* What! fifty of my followers at a clap,  
Within a fortnight?

*Alb.* What's the matter, sir?

*Lear.* I'll tell thee. [*To Goneril.*] Life and death!

I am asham'd 320

That thou hast power to shake my manhood thus,  
That these hot tears, which break from me perforce,  
Should make thee worth them. Blasts and fogs upon  
thee!

Th' untented woundings of a father's curse 324

Pierce every sense about thee! Old fond eyes,

Bewep this cause again, I'll pluck ye out,

And cast you, with the waters that you lose,

To temper clay. Yea, is it come to this? 328

Let it be so: I have another daughter,

Who, I am sure, is kind and comfortable:

When she shall hear this of thee, with her nails

She'll flay thy wolvisk visage. Thou shalt find

That I'll resume the shape which thou dost think 333

I have cast off for ever; thou shalt, I warrant thee.

[*Exeunt Lear, Kent, and Attendants.*]

*Gon.* Do you mark that?

*Alb.* I cannot be so partial, Goneril, 336

To the great love I bear you,—

*Gon.* Pray you, content. What, Oswald, ho!

[*To the Fool.*] You, sir, more knave than fool, after  
your master.

324 untented: *unsearchable*  
328 temper: *soften*

326 Beweep: *if you weep for*  
330 comfortable: *comforting*

Fool. Nuncle Lear, nuncle Lear! tarry, and  
take the fool with thee. 341

A fox, when one has caught her,  
And such a daughter,  
Should sure to the slaughter, 344  
If my cap would buy a halter;  
So the fool follows after. *Exit.*

*Gon.* This man hath had good counsel. A hundred  
knights!

'Tis politic and safe to let him keep 348  
At point a hundred knights; yes, that on every dream,  
Each buzz, each fancy, each complaint, dislike,  
He may enguard his dotage with their powers,  
And hold our lives in mercy. Oswald, I say! 352

*Alb.* Well, you may fear too far.

*Gon.* Safer than trust too far.

Let me still take away the harms I fear.  
Not fear still to be taken: I know his heart.  
What he hath utter'd I have writ my sister; 356  
If she sustain him and his hundred knights,  
When I have show'd the unfitness,—

*Enter Oswald.*

How now, Oswald!

What! have you writ that letter to my sister?

*Osw.* Ay, madam. 360

*Gon.* Take you some company, and away to horse;  
Inform her full of my particular fear;  
And thereto add such reasons of your own  
As may compact it more. Get you gone, 364

And hasten your return. [*Exit Oswald.*] No, no, my  
lord,

This milky gentleness and course of yours

349 At point: *in readiness*

364 compact: *strengthen*

366 gentleness and course: *gentleness of your course*

Though I condemn not, yet, under pardon,  
 You are much more attack'd for want of wisdom 368  
 Than prais'd for harmful mildness.

*Alb.* How far your eyes may pierce I cannot tell:  
 Striving to better, oft we mar what's well.

*Gon.* Nay, then— 372

*Alb.* Well, well; the event. *Exeunt.*

Scene Five

[*Near Albany's Palace*]

*Enter Lear, Kent, and Fool.*

*Lear.* Go you before to Gloucester with these  
 letters. Acquaint my daughter no further with  
 any thing you know than comes from her  
 demand out of the letter. If your diligence be  
 not speedy I shall be there before you. 5

*Kent.* I will not sleep, my lord, till I have  
 delivered your letter. *Exit.*

*Fool.* If a man's brains were in 's heels, were 't  
 not in danger of kibes? 9

*Lear.* Ay, boy.

*Fool.* Then, I prithee, be merry; ~~thy wit shall~~  
~~not go slip-shod.~~ 12

*Lear.* Ha, ha, ha!

*Fool.* Shalt see thy other daughter will use  
 thee kindly; for though she's as like this as a  
 crab is like an apple, yet I can tell what I can  
 tell. 17

*Lear.* What canst tell, boy?

368 attack'd: *blamed*

9 kibes: *chilblains*

15 kindly: *pun, with double meaning of 'gently' and 'naturally'*

16 crab: *crabapple*

373 the event: *the outcome (will show)*

*Fool.* She will taste as like this as a crab does to a crab. Thou canst tell why one's nose stands i' the middle on's face? 21

*Lear.* No.

*Fool.* Why, to keep one's eyes of either side's nose, that what a man cannot smell out, he may spy into. 25

*Lear.* I did her wrong,

*Fool.* Canst tell how an oyster makes his shell? 28

*Lear.* No.

*Fool.* Nor I neither; but I can tell why a snail has a house.

*Lear.* Why? 32

*Fool.* Why, to put his head in; not to give it away to his daughters, and leave his horns without a case. he shew  
how  
keep

*Lear.* I will forget my nature. So kind a father! Be my horses ready? 37

*Fool.* Thy asses are gone about 'em. The reason why the seven stars are no more than seven is a pretty reason. 40

*Lear.* Because they are not eight?

*Fool.* Yes, indeed: thou wouldst make a good fool.

*Lear.* To take it again perforce! Monster ingratitude! 45

*Fool.* If thou wert my fool, nuncle, I'd have thee beaten for being old before thy time.

*Lear.* How's that? 48

*Fool.* Thou shouldst not have been old before thou hadst been wise.

Lear. O! let me not be mad, not mad, sweet heaven;  
Keep me in <sup>sane</sup>temper; I would not be mad! 52

[Enter Gentleman.]

How now! Are the horses ready?

Gent. Ready, my lord.

Lear. Come, boy.

Fool. She that's a maid now, and laughs at my  
departure, 56

Shall not be a maid long, unless things be cut shorter.

*Exeunt.*

## ACT SECOND

### Scene One

[*Earl of Gloucester's Castle*]

*Enter Bastard [Edmund] and Curan, severally.*

*Edm.* Save thee, Curan.

*Cur.* And you, sir. I have been with your father, and given him notice that the Duke of Cornwall and Regan his duchess will be here with him to-night. 5

*Edm.* How comes that?

*Cur.* Nay, I know not. You have heard of the news abroad? I mean the whispered ones, for they are yet but ear-kissing arguments? 9

*Edm.* Not I: pray you, what are they?

*Cur.* Have you heard of no likely wars toward  
'twixt the Dukes of Cornwall and Albany? 12

*Edm.* Not a word.

*Cur.* You may do then, in time. Fare you well, sir. *Exit.*

Edm. The duke be here to-night! The better!  
best! 16

This weaves itself perforce into my business.  
My father hath set guard to take my brother;  
And I have one thing, of a queasy question,  
Which I must act. Briefness and fortune, work!  
Brother, a word; descend: brother, I say! 21

*Enter Edgar.*

My father watches: O sir! fly this place;  
Intelligence is given where you are hid;  
You have now the good advantage of the night. 24  
~~Have you not spoken 'gainst the Duke of Cornwall?~~  
~~He's coming hither, now, i' the night, i' the haste,~~  
And Regan with him; have you nothing said  
Upon his party 'gainst the Duke of Albany? 28  
Advise yourself.

Edg. I am sure on 't, not a word.

Edm. I hear my father coming; pardon me;  
In cunning I must draw my sword upon you;  
Draw; seem to defend yourself; now 'quit you well. 32  
Yield;—come before my father. Light, ho! here!  
Fly, brother. Torches! torches! So, farewell.

*Exit Edgar.*

Some blood drawn on me would beget opinion  
[Wounds his arm.]  
Of my more fierce endeavour: I have seen drunkards  
Do more than this in sport. Father! father!  
Stop, stop. No help?

*Enter Gloucester, and Servants with Torches.*

Glo. Now, Edmund, where's the villain?

Edm. Here stood he in the dark, his sharp sword  
out, 40

Mumbling of wicked charms, conjuring the moon  
To stand auspicious mistress.

*Glo.* But where is he?

*Edm.* Look, sir, I bleed.

*Glo.* Where is the villain, Edmund?

*Edm.* Fled this way, sir. When by no means he  
could— 44

*Glo.* Pursue him, ho! Go after. [*Exeunt some  
Servants.*] 'By no means' what?

*Edm.* Persuade me to the murder of your lordship;  
But that I told him, the revenging gods  
'Gainst parricides did all their thunders bend;  
Spoke with how manifold and strong a bond 49  
The child was bound to the father; sir, in fine,  
Seeing how loathly opposite I stood  
To his ~~unnatural~~ purpose, in fell motion, 52  
With his prepared sword he charges home  
My unprovided body, lanc'd mine arm:  
But when he saw my best alarum'd spirits  
Bold in the quarrel's right, rous'd to the encounter, 56  
Or whether gasted by the noise I made,  
Full suddenly he fled.

*Glo.* Let him fly far:

Not in this land shall he remain uncaught;  
And found—dispatch. The noble duke my master, 60  
My worthy arch and patron, comes to-night:  
By his authority I will proclaim it,  
That he which finds him shall deserve our thanks,  
Bringing the murderous coward to the stake; 64  
He that conceals him, death.

*Edm.* When I dissuaded him from his intent,  
And found him pight to do it, with curst speech

52 in fell motion: *with fierce skill*  
61 arch: *chief*

57 gasted: *scared*  
67 pight: *fixed* curst: *sharp*

I threaten'd to discover him: he replied, 68  
 'Thou unpossessing bastard! dost thou think,  
 If I would stand against thee, would the reposal  
 Of any trust, virtue, or worth, in thee  
 Make thy words faith'd? No: what I should  
 deny,— 72

As this I would; ay, though thou didst produce  
 My very character,—I'd turn it all  
 To thy suggestion, plot, and damned practice:  
 And thou must make a dullard of the world, 76  
If they not thought the profits of my death  
Were very pregnant and potential spurs  
To make thee seek it.'

*Glo.* Strong and fasten'd villain!  
Would he deny his letter? I never got him. 80

*Tucket within.*

Hark! the duke's trumpets. I know not why he  
 comes.

All ports I'll bar; the villain shall not 'scape;  
 The duke must grant me that: besides, his picture  
 I will send far and near, that all the kingdom 84  
 May have due note of him; and of my land,  
 Loyal and natural boy, I'll work the means  
To make thee capable.

*Enter Cornwall, Regan, and Attendants.*

*Corn.* How now, my noble friend! since I came  
 hither,— 88  
 Which I can call but now,—I have heard strange  
 news.

68 discover: *expose*

72 faith'd: *credited*

75 suggestion: *evil prompting*

78 pregnant: *inciting*

80 S. d. Tucket: *trumpet-notes, indicating march-signal*

82 ports: *gates*

86 natural: *real, my own*

87 capable: *legal heir*

69 unpossessing: *incapable of inheriting*

damned practice: *damnable trickery*



*Reg.* If it be true, all vengeance comes too short  
Which can pursue the offender. How dost, my lord?

*Glo.* ~~O! madam, my old heart is crack'd,~~ it's  
crack'd. 92

*Reg.* What! did my father's godson seek your life?  
He whom my father nam'd? your Edgar?

*Glo.* O! lady, lady, shame would have it hid.

*Reg.* Was he not companion with the riotous  
knights 96

That tend upon my father?

*Glo.* I know not, madam; 'tis too bad, too bad.

*Edm.* Yes, madam, he was of that consort.

*Reg.* No marvel then though he were ill  
affected; 100

'Tis they have put him on the old man's death,  
To have the expense and waste of his revenues.  
I have this present evening from my sister  
Been well-inform'd of them, and with such  
cautions 104

That if they come to sojourn at my house,  
I'll not be there.

*Corn.* Nor I, assure thee, Regan.

*Edmund,* I hear that you have shown your father  
A child-like office.

*Edm.* 'Twas my duty, sir. 108

*Glo.* He did bewray his practice; and receiv'd  
This hurt you see, striving to apprehend him.

*Corn.* Is he pursu'd?

*Glo.* Ay, my good lord.

*Corn.* If he be taken he shall never more 112  
Be fear'd of doing harm; make your own purpose,  
How in my strength you please. For you, Edmund,

102 expense and waste: *wasteful spending*

108 childlike: *filial* 109 bewray: *betray*

113 of doing: *lest he do*

Whose virtue and obedience doth this instant  
 So much commend itself, you shall be ours: 116  
 Natures of such deep trust we shall much need;  
You we first seize on.

*Edm.* I shall serve you, sir,  
 Truly, however else.

*Glo.* For him I thank your Grace.

*Corn.* You know not why we came to visit  
 you,— 120

*Reg.* Thus out of season, threading dark-ey'd  
 night:

Occasions, noble Gloucester, of some prize,  
 Wherein we must have use of your advice.  
 Our father he hath writ, so hath our sister, 124  
 Of differences, which I best thought it fit  
 To answer from our home; the several messengers  
 From hence attend dispatch. Our good old friend,  
 Lay comforts to your bosom, and bestow 128  
 Your needful counsel to our businesses,  
 Which craves the instant use.

*Glo.* I serve you, madam.  
 Your Graces are right welcome. *Exeunt. Flourish.*

## Scene Two

[*Before Gloucester's Castle*]

*Enter Kent and Steward* [*Oswald*] *severally.*

*Osw.* Good dawning to thee, friend: art of  
 this house?

*Kent.* Ay.

*Osw.* Where may we set our horses? 4

*Kent.* I' the mire.

Osw. Prithee, if thou lovest me, tell me.

Kent. I love thee not.

Osw. Why, then I care not for thee. 8

Kent. If I had thee in Lipsbury pinfeld, I would make thee care for me.

Osw. Why dost thou use me thus? I know thee not. 12

Kent. Fellow, I know thee.

Osw. What dost thou know me for?

Kent. A knave, a rascal, an eater of broken meats; a base, proud, shallow, beggarly, three-suited, hundred-pound, filthy, worsted-stocking knave; a lily-liver'd, action-taking knave; a whoreson, glass-gazing, superserviceable, finical rogue; one-trunk-inheriting slave; one that wouldst be a bawd, in way of good service, and art nothing but the composition of a knave, beggar, coward, pandar, and the son and heir of a mongrel bitch: one whom I will beat into clamorous whining if thou deniest the least syllable of thy addition. 26

Osw. Why, what a monstrous fellow art thou, thus to rail on one that is neither known of thee nor knows thee! 29

Kent. What a brazen-faced varlet art thou, to deny thou knowest me! Is it two days since I tripped up thy heels and beat thee before the king? Draw, you rogue; for, though it be night, yet the moon shines: I'll make a sop o' the moonshine of you. [Drawing his sword.]

9 Lipsbury pinfeld; cf. n.

16 three-suited; cf. n.

19 glass-gazing: fond of the mirror

20 one-trunk-inheriting: owning only one trunk

34 sop o' the moonshine: make moonlight shine through him

15 broken meats: scraps

18 action-taking: given to lawsuits

superserviceable: officious

Draw, you whoreson, cullionly barber-monger,  
draw. 87

*Osw.* Away! I have nothing to do with thee.

*Kent.* Draw, you rascal; you come with letters against the king, and take vanity the puppet's part against the royalty of her father. Draw, you rogue, or I'll so carbonado your shanks: draw, you rascal; come your ways.

*Osw.* Help, ho! murder! help! 44

*Kent.* Strike, you slave; stand, rogue, stand; you neat slave, strike. [*Beating him.*]

*Osw.* Help, oh! murder! murder!

*Enter Bastard [Edmund], Cornwall, Regan,  
Gloucester, [and] Servants.*

*Edm.* How now! What's the matter? 48

*Kent.* With you, goodman boy, if you please: come, I'll flesh ye; come on, young master.

*Glo.* Weapons! arms! What's the matter here?

*Corn.* Keep peace, upon your lives: 52

He dies that strikes again. What is the matter?

*Reg.* The messengers from our sister and the king.

*Corn.* What is your difference? speak.

*Osw.* I am scarce in breath, my lord. 56

*Kent.* No marvel, you have so bestirred your valour. You cowardly rascal, nature disclaims in thee: a tailor made thee.

*Corn.* Thou art a strange fellow; a tailor make a man? 61

*Kent.* Ay, a tailor, sir: a stone-cutter or a

36 cullionly: *knaveish* barber-monger: *patron of the barber's shop*  
40 vanity the puppet's: *Vanity, a personified character in the Morality plays*  
42 carbonado: *slice* 46 neat: *mere, very*  
49 goodman: *a plebeian form of address* 58 disclaims: *claims no share*

painter could not have made him so ill, though  
they had been but two hours o' the trade. 64

*Corn.* Speak yet, how grew your quarrel?

*Osw.* This ancient ruffian, sir, whose life I  
have spar'd at suit of his grey beard,— 67

*Kent.* Thou whoreson zed! thou unnecessary  
letter! My lord, if you will give me leave, I will  
tread this unbolted villain into mortar, and  
daub the wall of a jakes with him. Spare my  
grey beard, you wagtail! 72

*Corn.* Peace, sirrah!

You beastly knave, know you no reverence?

*Kent.* Yes, sir; but anger hath a privilege.

*Corn.* Why art thou angry? 76

*Kent.* ~~That such a slave as this should wear a  
sword,~~

Who wears no honesty. Such smiling rogues as these,  
Like rats, oft bite the holy cords a-twain

Which are too intrinse t' unloose; smooth every  
passion 80

That in the natures of their lords rebel;

Bring oil to fire, snow to their colder moods;

Renege, affirm, and turn their halcyon beaks

With every gale and vary of their masters, 84

Knowing nought, like dogs, but following.

A plague upon your epileptic visage!

Smile you my speeches, as I were a fool?

Goose, if I had you upon Sarum plain, 88

I'd drive ye cackling home to Camelot.

*Corn.* What! art thou mad, old fellow?

*Glo.* How fell you out? say that.

68 zed; *cf. n.*

79, 80 holy cords . . . too intrinse; *cf. n.*

83 Renege: *deny* halcyon; *cf. n.*

84 gale: *breeze* vary: *variation*

88 Sarum: *Salisbury*

70 unbolted: *unrefined*

71 a jakes: *a privy*

89 Camelot; *cf. n.*

*Kent.* No contraries hold more antipathy  
Than I and such a knave. 92

*Corn.* Why dost thou call him knave? What is  
his fault?

*Kent.* His countenance likes me not.

*Corn.* No more, perchance, does mine, nor  
his, nor hers. 97

*Kent.* Sir, 'tis my occupation to be plain—  
I have seen better faces in my time  
Than stands on any shoulder that I see 100  
Before me at this instant.

*Corn.* This is some fellow,  
Who, having been prais'd for bluntness, doth affect  
A saucy roughness, and constrains the garb  
Quite from his nature: he cannot flatter, he, 104  
An honest mind and plain, he must speak truth:  
An they will take it, so; if not, he's plain.  
These kind of knaves I know, which in this plainness  
Harbour more craft and more corrupter ends  
Than twenty silly-ducking observants, 109  
That stretch their duties nicely.

*Kent.* Sir, in good sooth, in sincere verity,  
Under the allowance of your grand aspect, 112  
Whose influence, like the wreath of radiant fire  
On flickering Phœbus' front,—

*Corn.* What mean'st by this?

*Kent.* To go out of my dialect, which you  
discommend so much. I know, sir, I am no  
flatterer: he that beguiled you in a plain accent  
was a plain knave; which for my part I will not  
be, though I should win your displeasure to en-  
treat me to 't. 120

103 constrains the garb: forces the fashion

104 from: contrary to 109 observants: courtiers 111 sooth: truth

*Corn.* What was the offence you gave him?

*Osw.* I never gave him any:

It pleas'd the king his master very late  
To strike at me, upon his misconstruction; 124  
 When he, conjunct, and flattering his displeasure,  
 Tripp'd me behind; being down, insulted, rail'd,  
 And put upon him such a deal of man,  
 That worthied him, got praises of the king 128  
 For him attempting who was self-subdu'd;  
 And, in the fleshment of this dread exploit,  
 Drew on me here again.

*Kent.* None of these rogues and cowards  
 But Ajax is their fool.

*Corn.* Fetch forth the stocks! 132  
 You stubborn ancient knave, you reverend braggart,  
 We'll teach you.

*Kent.* Sir, I am too old to learn.  
 Call not your stocks for me; I serve the king,  
 On whose employment I was sent to you; 136  
 You shall do small respect, show too bold malice  
 Against the grace and person of my master,  
Stocking his messenger.

*Corn.* Fetch forth the stocks! As I have life and  
 honour, 140  
 There shall he sit till noon.

*Reg.* Till noon! Till night, my lord; and all night  
 too.

*Kent.* Why, madam, if I were your father's dog,  
 You should not use me so.

*Reg.* Sir, being his knave, I will. 144

*Corn.* This is a fellow of the self-same colour  
 Our sister speaks of. Come, bring away the stocks.

125 conjunct: *in league*

130 fleshment: *first taste*

128 worthied: *covered with dignity*

132 Ajax; *cf. n.*

146 away: *hither; cf. n.*

They use them as pawns to get  
*King Lear, II. ii* back at each other 47

*Stocks brought out.*

*Glo.* Let me beseech your Grace not to do so.  
[His fault is much, and the good king his master 148  
Will check him for 't: your purpos'd low correction  
Is such as basest and contemn'd st wretches  
For pilferings and most common trespasses  
Are punish'd with:] the king must take it ill, 152  
That he, so slightly valu'd in his messenger,  
Should have him thus restrain'd.

*Corn.* I'll answer that.

*Reg.* My sister may receive it much more worse  
To have her gentleman abus'd, assaulted, 156  
For following her affairs. Put in his legs.

[*Kent is put in the stocks.*]

Come, my good lord, away.

[*Exeunt all but Gloucester and Kent.*]

*Glo.* I am sorry for thee, friend; 'tis the duke's  
pleasure,

Whose disposition, all the world well knows, 160  
Will not be rubb'd nor stopp'd: I'll entreat for thee.

*Kent.* Pray, do not, sir. I have watch'd and  
travell'd hard;

Some time I shall sleep out, the rest I'll whistle.  
A good man's fortune may grow out at heels: 164  
Give you good morrow!

*Glo.* The duke's to blame in this; 'twill be ill taken.  
*Exit.*

*Kent.* Good king, that must approve the common  
saw,  
Thou out of heaven's benediction com'st 168  
To the warm sun.  
Approach, thou beacon to this under globe,  
That by thy comfortable beams I may



Peruse this letter. Nothing almost sees miracles  
 But misery: I know 'tis from Cordelia, 173  
 Who hath most fortunately been inform'd  
 Of my obscured course; and shall find time  
 From this enormous state, seeking to give 176  
 Losses their remedies. All weary and o'er-watch'd,  
 Take vantage, heavy eyes, not to behold  
 This shameful lodging.  
Fortune, good night, smile once more; turn thy wheel!  
 [He sleeps.]

## Scene Three

[A Heath]

*Enter Edgar.*

*Edg.* I heard myself proclaim'd;  
 And by the happy hollow of a tree  
 Escap'd the hunt. No port is free; no place,  
 That guard, and most unusual vigilance, 4  
 Does not attend my taking. While I may 'scape  
 I will preserve myself; and am bethought  
To take the basest and most poorest shape  
That ever penury, in contempt of man, 8  
Brought near to beast; my face I'll grime with filth,  
Blanket my loins, elf all my hair in knots,  
And with presented nakedness outface  
The winds and persecutions of the sky. 12  
The country gives me proof and precedent  
 Of Bedlam beggars, who with roaring voices,  
 Strike in their numb'd and mortified bare arms  
 Pins, wooden pricks, nails, sprigs of rosemary;  
 And with this horrible object, from low farms,

172 miracles; cf. n.

10 elf; *twist*

14 Bedlam; cf. n.

Poor pelting villages, sheep-cotes, and mills,  
Sometime with lunatic bans, sometime with prayers,  
Enforce their charity. Poor Turlygood! poor

Tom!

20

That's something yet: Edgar I nothing am. *Exit.*

X

Scene Four

[*Before Gloucester's Castle. Kent in the Stocks*]

*Enter Lear, Fool, and Gentleman.*

*Lear.* 'Tis strange that they should so depart from  
home,

And not send back my messenger.

*Gent.*

As I learn'd,

The night before there was no purpose in them  
Of this remove.

*Kent.* Hail to thee, noble master! 4

*Lear.* Ha!

Mak'st thou this shame thy pastime?

*Kent.*

No, my lord.

*Fool.* Ha, ha! he wears cruel garters. Horses  
are tied by the head, dogs and bears by the neck,  
monkeys by the loins, and men by the legs:  
when a man is over-lusty at legs, then he wears  
wooden nether-stocks.

*Lear.* What's he that hath so much thy place  
mistook 12

To set thee here?

*Kent.*

It is both he and she,

Your son and daughter.

*Lear.* No.

*Kent.* Yes. 16

18 pelting: *contemptible*

20 Turlygood; *cf. n.*

11 nether-stocks: *stocks was an old word for stockings*

19 bans: *curses*

7 cruel: *pun on crewel, i.e., worsted*

- Lear.* No, I say.
- Kent.* I say, yea.
- Lear.* No, no; they would not.
- Kent.* Yes, they have. 20
- Lear.* By Jupiter, I swear, no.
- Kent.* By Juno, I swear, ay.
- Lear.* They durst not do 't;  
They could not, would not do 't; 'tis worse than  
murder,
- To do upon respect such violent outrage. 24
- Resolve me, with all modest haste, which way  
Thou mightst deserve, or they impose, this usage,  
Coming from us.
- Kent.* My lord, when at their home  
I did commend your highness' letters to them,  
Ere I was risen from the place that show'd 29  
My duty kneeling, there came a reeking post,  
Stew'd in his haste, half breathless, panting forth  
From Goneril his mistress salutations; 32  
Deliver'd letters, spite of intermission,  
Which presently they read: on whose contents  
They summon'd up their meiny, straight took horse;  
Commanded me to follow, and attend 36  
The leisure of their answer; gave me cold looks:  
And meeting here the other messenger,  
Whose welcome, I perceiv'd, had poison'd mine,—  
Being the very fellow which of late 40  
Display'd so saucily against your highness,—  
Having more man than wit about me,—drew:  
He rais'd the house with loud and coward cries.  
Your son and daughter found this trespass worth 44  
The shame which here it suffers.

24 upon respect: *deliberately*33 spite of intermission: *despite my prior claim*25 Resolve: *inform*35 meiny: *people*

*Fool.* Winter's not gone yet, if the wild geese fly that way.

Fathers that wear rags 48

Do make their children blind,

But fathers that bear bags

Shall see their children kind.

Fortune, that arrant whore, 52

Ne'er turns the key to the poor.

But for all this thou shalt have as many dolours for thy daughters as thou canst tell in a year.

*Lear.* O! how this mother swells up toward my heart; 56

*Hysterica passio!* down, thou climbing sorrow!  
Thy element's below. Where is this daughter?

*Kent.* With the earl, sir: here within.

*Lear.* Follow me not; stay here. *Exit.*

*Gent.* Made you no more offence than what you speak of?

*Kent.* None.

How chance the king comes with so small a number? 64

*Fool.* An thou hadst been set i' the stocks for that question, thou hadst well deserved it.

*Kent.* Why, fool? 67

*Fool.* We'll set thee to school to an ant, to teach thee there's no labouring i' the winter. All that follow their noses are led by their eyes but blind men; and there's not a nose among twenty but can smell him that's stinking. Let go thy hold when a great wheel runs down a hill, lest it break thy neck with following it; but the great one that goes up the hill, let him draw thee after.

54 dolours: pun on dollars

56 mother: vertigo, a disease called the "hysterical passion"

55 tell: count

When a wise man gives thee better counsel, give  
me mine again: I would have none but knaves  
follow it, since a fool gives it.

That sir which serves and seeks for gain,  
And follows but for form, 80

Will pack when it begins to rain,  
And leave thee in the storm.

But I will tarry; the fool will stay,  
And let the wise man fly: 84

The knave turns fool that runs away;  
The fool no knave, perdy.

*Kent.* Where learn'd you this, fool?

*Fool.* Not i' the stocks, fool. 88

*Enter Lear, and Gloucester.*

*Lear.* Deny to speak with me! They are sick!  
they are weary,

They have travell'd hard to-night! Mere fetches,  
The images of revolt and flying off,

Fetch me a better answer.

*Glo.* My dear lord, 92

You know the fiery quality of the duke;

How unremovable and fix'd he is

In his own course.

*Lear.* Vengeance! plague! death! confusion!  
Fiery! what quality? Why, Gloucester, Gloucester, 97  
I'd speak with the Duke of Cornwall and his wife.

*Glo.* Well, my good lord, I have inform'd them so.

*Lear.* Inform'd them! Dost thou understand me,  
man? 100

*Glo.* Ay, my good lord.

*Lear.* The king would speak with Cornwall; the  
dear father

81 pack: *hurry off*

89 Deny: *refuse*

90 fetches: *tricks*

86 perdy: *by God, pardieu*

91 flying off: *desertion*

Would with his daughter speak, commands her service: 108

Are they inform'd of this? My breath and blood!

Fiery! the fiery duke! Tell the hot duke that—

No, but not yet; may be he is not well:

Infirmity doth still neglect all office

Whereto our health is bound; we are not ourselves 109

When nature, being oppress'd, commands the mind

To suffer with the body. I'll forbear;

And am fall'n out with my more headier will,

To take the indispos'd and sickly fit 112

For the sound man. Death on my state! [*Looking on Kent.*] Wherefore

Should he sit here? This act persuades me

That this remotion of the duke and her

Is practice only. Give me my servant forth. 116

Go, tell the duke and 's wife I'd speak with them,

Now, presently: bid them come forth and hear me,

Or at their chamber-door I'll beat the drum

Till it cry sleep to death. 120

*Glo.* I would have all well betwixt you. *Exit.*

*Lear.* O, me! my heart, my rising heart! but, down!

*Fool.* Cry to it, nuncle, as the cockney did to the eels when she put 'em i' the paste alive; she knapped 'em o' the coxcombs with a stick, and cried, 'Down, wantons, down!' 'Twas her brother that, in pure kindness to his horse, buttered his hay. 128

*Enter Cornwall, Regan, Gloucester, [and] Servants.*

*Lear.* Good morrow to you both.

*Corn.*

Hail to your Grace.

*Kent here set at liberty.*

107 office: *duty*

115 remotion: *removal*

123 cockney: *cook*

111 more headier: *too headstrong*

120 cry sleep to death: *murder sleep*

125 knapped: *rapped* (*pronounce the k*)

*Reg.* I am glad to see your highness.

*Lear.* Regan, I think you are; I know what reason I have to think so: if thou shouldst not be glad,

I would divorce me from thy mother's tomb, 133  
Sepulchring an adult'ress.—[*To Kent.*] O! are you free?

Some other time for that. Beloved Regan,  
Thy sister's naught: O Regan! she hath tied 138  
Sharp-tooth'd unkindness, like a vulture, here:

[*Points to his heart.*]

I can scarce speak to thee; thou'lt not believe  
With how deprav'd a quality—O Regan!

*Reg.* I pray you, sir, take patience. I have hope 140

You less know how to value her desert  
Than she to scant her duty.

*Lear.* Say, how is that?

*Reg.* I cannot think my sister in the least  
Would fail her obligation: if, sir, perchance 144  
She have restrain'd the riots of your followers,  
'Tis on such ground, and to such wholesome end,  
As clears her from all blame.

*Lear.* My curses on her!

*Reg.* O, sir! you are old; 148

Nature in you stands on the very verge  
Of her confine: you should be rul'd and led — *passive*  
By some discretion that discerns your state  
Better than you yourself. Therefore I pray you  
That to our sister you do make return; 153  
Say, you have wrong'd her, sir.

*Lear.* Ask her forgiveness?

Do you but mark how this becomes the house:

136 naught: worthless  
150 confine: territory

139 quality: manner  
155 house: household order

Is Regan on Cord's side?

'Dear daughter, I confess that I am old; 156  
Age is unnecessary: on my knees I beg  
That you'll vouchsafe me raiment, bed, and food.'

*Reg.* Good sir, no more; these are unsightly tricks:  
Return you to my sister.

*Lear.* Never, Regan. 160  
She hath abated me of half my train;  
Look'd black upon me; struck me with her tongue,  
Most serpent-like upon the very heart.  
All the stor'd vengeance of heaven fall 164  
On her ingrateful top! Strike her young bones,  
You taking airs, with lameness!

*Corn.* Fie, sir, fie!

*Lear.* You nimble lightnings, dart your blinding  
flames  
Into her scornful eyes! Infect her beauty, 168  
You fen-suck'd fogs, drawn by the powerful sun,  
To fall and blast her pride!

*Reg.* O the blest gods! So will you wish on me,  
When the rash mood is 'on. 172

*Lear.* No, Regan, thou shalt never have my curse:  
Thy tender-hefted nature shall not give  
Thee o'er to harshness: her eyes are fierce but thine  
Be comfort and not burn. 'Tis not in thee 176  
To grudge my pleasures, to cut off my train,  
To bandy hasty words, to scant my sizes,  
And, in conclusion, to oppose the bolt  
Against my coming in: thou better know'st 180  
The offices of nature, bond of childhood,  
Effects of courtesy, dues of gratitude;  
Thy half o' the kingdom hast thou not forgot,  
Wherein I thee endow'd.

161 abated: *deprived* 166 taking: *possessing, in the sense of malignant*  
170 fall: *make fall* 174 tender-hefted: *softly framed*  
178 sizes: *allowances*



*Reg.* Good sir, to the purpose. 184

*Lear.* Who put my man i' the stocks?

*Tucket within.*

*Corn.* What trumpet's that?

*Reg.* I know 't, my sister's; this approves her letter,

That she would soon be here. Is your lady come?

*Enter Steward [Oswald.]*

*Lear.* This is a slave, whose easy-borrow'd pride 188

Dwells in the fickle grace of her he follows.

Out, varlet, from my sight!

*Corn.* What means your Grace?

*Lear.* Who stock'd my servant? Regan, I have good hope

Thou didst not know on 't. Who comes here? O heavens, 192

*Enter Goneril.*

If you do love old men, if your sweet sway

Allow obedience, if yourselves are old,

Make it your cause; send down and take my part!

[*To Goneril.*] Art not asham'd to look upon this beard? 196

O Regan, wilt thou take her by the hand?

*Gon.* Why not by the hand, sir? How have I offended?

All's not offence that indiscretion finds

And dotage terms so.

*Lear.* O sides! you are too tough;

Will you yet hold? How came my man i' the stocks? 201

*Can he keep his  
wit from breaking.*

*! Paganist.  
Lear takes slave several  
hundred years B.C.*

*Corn.* I set him there, sir: but his own disorders  
Deserv'd much less advancement.

*Lear.* You! did you?

*Reg.* I pray you, father, being weak, seem so.  
If, till the expiration of your month, 205  
You will return and sojourn with my sister,  
Dismissing half your train, come then to me:  
I am now from home, and out of that provision  
Which shall be needful for your entertainment.

*Lear.* Return to her? and fifty men dismiss'd!  
No, rather I abjure all roofs, and choose  
To wage against the enmity o' the air;  
To be a comrade with the wolf and owl,  
Necessity's sharp pinch! Return with her!  
Why, the hot-blooded France, that dowerless took Cordelia.  
Our youngest born, I could as well be brought  
To kneel his throne, and, squire-like, pension beg  
To keep base life afoot. Return with her!  
Persuade me rather to be slave and sumpter  
To this detested groom. Oswald.

*Gon.* At your choice, sir. 220

*Lear.* I prithee, daughter, do not make me mad:  
I will not trouble thee, my child; farewell. *Ragan's*  
We'll no more meet, no more see one another; *gonevil.*  
But yet thou art my flesh, my blood, my daughter; 224  
Or rather a disease that's in my flesh,  
Which I must needs call mine: thou art a boil,  
A plague-sore, an embossed carbuncle,  
in my corrupted blood. But I'll not chide thee; 228  
Let shame come when it will, I do not call it.  
I do not bid the thunder-bearer shoot,  
Nor tell tales of thee to high-judging Jove.

202 disorders: disorderly acts  
219 sumpter: drudge

212 wage: wage war  
227 embossed: swollen

Mend when thou canst; be better at thy leisure: 232  
 I can be patient; I can stay with Regan,  
 I and my hundred knights.

*Reg.* Not altogether so:

*Argues* I look'd not for you yet, nor am provided  
*favor* For your fit welcome. Give ear, sir, to my sister; 236  
*of countenance* ~~For those that mingle reason with your passion~~  
~~Must be content to think you old, and so—~~  
 But she knows what she does.

*Lear.* Is this well spoken?

*Reg.* I dare avouch it, sir: what! fifty fol-  
 lowers? 240

Is it not well? What should you need of more?  
 Yea, or so many, sith that both charge and danger  
 Speak 'gainst so great a number? How, in one house,  
 Should many people, under two commands, . 244  
 Hold amity? 'Tis hard; almost impossible.

*Gon.* Why might not you, my lord, receive attend-  
 ance

From those that she calls servants, or from mine?

*Reg.* Why not, my lord? If then they chanc'd to  
 slack you 248

We could control them. If you will come to me,—  
 For now I spy a danger,—I entreat you  
To bring but five-and-twenty; to no more  
 Will I give place or notice. 252

*Lear.* I gave you all—

*Reg.*  And in good time you gave it.

*Lear.* Made you my guardians, my depositaries,  
 But kept a reservation to be follow'd  
 With such a number. What! must I come to you 256  
 With five-and-twenty? Regan, said you so?

*Reg.* And speak 't again, my lord; no more with me.

*Lear.* Those wicked creatures yet do look well-  
favour'd,  
When others are more wicked; not being the worst 260  
Stands in some rank of praise. [*To Goneril.*] I'll  
go with thee:  
Thy fifty yet doth double five-and-twenty,  
And thou art twice her love.

*Gon.* Hear me, my lord.  
~~What need you five-and-twenty, ten, or five,~~ 264  
~~To follow in a house, where twice so many—~~  
Have a command to tend you?

*Reg.* ~~What need one?~~ |||

*Lear.* O! reason not the need; our basest beggars  
Are in the poorest thing superfluous: 268  
Allow not nature more than nature needs,  
Man's life is cheap as beast's. ~~Thou art a lady;~~  
If only to go warm were gorgeous,  
Why, nature needs not what thou gorgeous  
wear'st, 272  
Which scarcely keeps thee warm. But, for true  
need,—

You heavens, give me that patience, patience I need!  
You see me here, you gods, a poor old man, *with self*  
As full of grief as age; wretched in both! 276  
If it be you that stir these daughters' hearts  
Against their father, fool me not so much  
To bear it tamely; touch me with noble anger,  
And let not women's weapons, water-drops, 280  
Stain my man's cheeks! No, you unnatural hags,  
I will have such revenges on you both  
That all the world shall—I will do such things,—  
What they are yet I know not,—but they shall be 284

268 superfluous: possessed of more than they need

271 gorgeous; cf. n. 278 fool . . . much: make me not such a fool

The terrors of the earth. You think I'll weep;

No, I'll not weep:

I have full cause of weeping, but this heart<sup>7</sup>

*Storm and Tempest.*

Shall break into a hundred thousand flaws 288

Or ere I'll weep. O fool! I shall go mad,

*Exeunt [Lear, Gloucester, Kent, and Fool.]*

*Corn.* Let us withdraw; 'twill be a storm.

*Reg.* This house is little: the old man and his  
people

Cannot be well bestow'd. 292

*Gon.* 'Tis his own blame; hath put himself from  
rest,

And must needs taste his folly.

*Reg.* For his particular, I'll receive him gladly,  
But not one follower.

*Gon.* So am I purpos'd. 296

Where is my Lord of Gloucester?

*Corn.* Follow'd the old man forth. He is return'd.

*Enter Gloucester.*

*Glo.* The king is in high rage.

*Corn.* Whither is he going?

*Glo.* He calls to horse; but will I know not  
whither. 300

*Corn.* 'Tis best to give him way; he leads himself.

*Gon.* My lord, entreat him by no means to stay.

*Glo.* Alack! the night comes on, and the bleak  
winds

Do sorely ruffle; for many miles about 304

There's scarce a bush.

*Reg.* O! sir, to wilful men,

The injuries that they themselves procure

288 flaws: *pieces*

295 For his particular: *in regard to himself*

304 ruffle: *bluster*

Must be their schoolmasters. Shut up your doors;  
 He is attended with a desperate train, 308  
 And what they may incense him to, being apt  
 To have his ear abus'd, wisdom bids fear.

*Corn.* Shut up your doors, my lord; 'tis a wild  
 night:

My Regan counsels well: come out o' the storm.

*Exeunt.*

### ACT THIRD

#### Scene One

[*The Heath*]

*Storm still. Enter Kent and a Gentleman, severally.*

*Kent.* Who's here, beside foul weather?

*Gent.* One minded like the weather, most unquietly.

*Kent.* I know you. Where's the king?

*Gent.* Contending with the fretful elements;

Bids the wind blow the earth into the sea, 5

Or swell the curled waters 'bove the main,

That things might change or cease; [tears his white  
 hair,

Which the impetuous blasts, with eyeless rage, 8

Catch in their fury, and make nothing of;

Strives in his little world of man to out-scorn

The to-and-fro-conflicting wind and rain.

This night, wherein the cub-drawn bear would  
 couch, 12

The lion and the belly-pinched wolf

Keep their fur dry, unbonneted he runs,

And bids what will take all.]

*Kent.* But who is with him?

*Gent.* None but the fool, who labours to out-jest 18  
His heart-struck injuries.

*Kent.* Sir, I do know you;  
And dare, upon the warrant of my note,  
Commend a dear thing to you. There is division,  
Although as yet the face of it be cover'd 20  
With mutual cunning, 'twixt Albany and Cornwall;  
Who have—as who have not, that their great stars  
Thron'd and set high—servants, who seem no less,  
Which are to France the spies and speculations  
Intelligent of our state; what hath been seen, 25  
Either in snuffs and packings of the dukes,  
Or the hard rein which both of them have borne  
Against the old kind king; or something deeper,  
Whereof perchance these are but furnishings; 29  
[But, true it is, from France there comes a power  
Into this scatter'd kingdom; who already,  
Wise in our negligence, have secret feet 32  
In some of our best ports, and are at point  
To show their open banner. Now to you:  
If on my credit you dare build so far  
To make your speed to Dover, you shall find 36  
Some that will thank you, making just report  
Of how unnatural and bemeddling sorrow  
The king hath cause to plain.  
I am a gentleman of blood and breeding, 40  
And from some knowledge and assurance offer  
This office to you.]

*Gent.* I will talk further with you.

18 note: observation

23 no less: no less than true servants

24 speculations: scouts

25 Intelligent: giving intelligence, i.e., knowledge

26 snuffs: resentments packings: sudden starts

29 furnishings: outer coverings

39 plain: complain

41. knowledge and assurance: sure knowledge

Kent.

No, do not.

For confirmation that I am much more 44

Than my out-wall, open this purse, and take

What it contains. If you shall see Cordelia,—

As doubt not but you shall,—show her this ring,And she will tell you who your fellow is 48That yet you do not know. Fie on this storm!

I will go seek the king.

Gent. Give me your hand. Have you no more to say?

Kent. Few words, but, to effect, more than all yet; 52

That, when we have found the king,—in which your pain

That way, I'll this,—he that first lights on him

Holla the other. *Exeunt.*

Scene Two

[*The Same*]*Storm Still.**Enter Lear and Fool.*Lear. Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks! rage!  
blow!

You cataracts and hurricanoes, spout

Till you have drench'd our steeples, drown'd the  
*washer* cocks!

You sulphurous and thought-executing fires, 4

Vaunt-couriers to oak-cleaving thunderbolts,

Singe my white head! And thou, all-shaking thunder,Strike flat the thick rotundity o' the world!Crack nature's moulds, all germens spill at once48 fellow: *companion*2 hurricanoes: *water-spouts*4 thought-executing: *acting God's thought*5 Vaunt-couriers: *advance messengers*52 to effect: *in importance*3 cocks: *weathercocks on steeples*8 germens: *seeds*



That make ingrateful man! 9

*Fool.* O nuncle, court holy-water in a dry house is better than this rain-water out o' door. Good nuncle, in, and ask thy daughters' blessing; here's a night pities neither wise man nor fool.

*Lear.* Rumble thy bellyful! Spit fire! spout rain! 14

Nor rain, wind, thunder, fire, are my daughters:

I tax not you, you elements, with unkindness;

I never gave you kingdom, call'd you children,

You owe me no subscription: then, let fall

Your horrible pleasure; here I stand, your slave,

A poor, infirm, weak, and despis'd old man. 20

But yet I call you servile ministers,

That have with two pernicious daughters join'd

Your high-engender'd battles 'gainst a head

So old and white as this. O! O! 'tis foul. 24

*Fool.* He that has a house to put his head in has a good head-piece.

The cod-piece that will house

Before the head has any, 28

The head and he shall louse;

So beggars marry many.

The man that makes his toe

What he his heart should make, 32

Shall of a corn cry woe,

And turn his sleep to wake.

For there was never yet fair woman but she made mouths in a glass. 36

*Enter Kent.*

*Lear.* No, I will be the pattern of all patience; I will say nothing.

10 court holy-water: *flattery*

18 subscription: *allegiance*

27 cod-piece: *part of man's dress between the legs*

*Kent.* Who's there?

*Fool.* Marry, here's grace and a cod-piece;  
that's a wise man and a fool. 41

*Kent.* Alas! sir, are you here? things that love  
night

Love not such nights as these; the wrathful skies  
Gallow the very wanderers of the dark, 44

And make them keep their caves. Since I was man  
Such sheets of fire, such bursts of horrid thunder,  
Such groans of roaring wind and rain, I never

~~Remember to have heard; man's nature cannot  
carry...~~ 48

The affliction nor the fear.

*Lear.* Let the great gods,  
That keep this dreadful pother o'er our heads,  
Find out their enemies now. Tremble, thou wretch,  
That hast within thee undivulged crimes, 52  
Unwhipp'd of justice; hide thee, thou bloody hand;  
Thou perjur'd, and thou simular of virtue  
That art incestuous; caitiff, to pieces shake,  
That under covert and convenient seeming 56  
Hast practis'd on man's life; close pent-up guilts.  
Rive your concealing continents, and cry  
These dreadful summoners grace. ~~I am a man~~  
More sinn'd against than sinning.

*Kent.* Alack! bare-headed!  
Gracious my lord, hard by here is a hovel; 61

Some friendship will it lend you 'gainst the tempest  
Repose you there while I to this hard house,—

More harder than the stone whereof 'tis rais'd,—  
Which even but now, demanding after you, 65

Denied me to come in, return and force  
Their scanted courtesy.

44 Gallow: terrify 50 pother: disturbance  
58 Rive: split continents: covers

54 simular: simulator  
59 grace: mercy

*Lear.* My wits begin to turn.  
 Come on, my boy. How dost, my boy? Art cold? 68  
 I am cold myself. Where is this straw, my fellow?  
 The art of our necessities is strange,  
 That can make vile things precious. Come, your  
 hovel.

Poor fool and knave, I have one part in my heart 72  
 That's sorry yet for thee.

~~*Fool.*~~  
 He that has a little tiny wit,  
 With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,  
 Must make content with his fortunes fit, 76  
 Though the rain it raineth every day.

*Lear.* True, my good boy. Come, bring us to this  
 hovel. ~~Exit~~ *Exit [with Kent].*

*Fool.* This is a brave night to cool a courtezan.  
 I'll speak a prophecy ere I go: 80  
 When priests are more in word than matter;  
 When brewers mar their malt with water;  
 When nobles are their tailors' tutors;  
 No heretics burn'd, but wenches' suitors; 84  
 When every case in law is right;  
 No squire in debt, nor no poor knight;  
 When slanders do not live in tongues;  
 Nor cutpurses come not to throngs; 88  
 When usurers tell their gold i' the field;  
 And bawds and whores do churches build;  
 Then shall the realm of Albion  
 Come to great confusion: 92  
 Then comes the time, who lives to see 't,  
 That going shall be us'd with feet.

This prophecy Merlin shall make; for I live ..  
before his time, *Exit.*

84 suitors; cf. n.

92 confusion: destruction

95 Merlin; cf. n.

## Scene Three

[Gloucester's Castle]

*Enter Gloucester and Edmund.*

*Glo.* Alack, alack! Edmund, I like not this unnatural dealing. When I desired their leave that I might pity him, they took from me the use of mine own house; charged me, on pain of their perpetual displeasure, neither to speak of him, entreat for him, nor any way sustain him.

*Edm.* Most savage, and unnatural! 7

*Glo.* Go to; say you nothing. There is division between the dukes, and a worse matter than that. I have received a letter this night; 'tis dangerous to be spoken; I have locked the letter in my closet. These injuries the king now bears will be revenged home; there's part of a power already footed; we must incline to the king. I will seek him and privily relieve him; go you and maintain talk with the duke, that my charity be not of him perceived. If he ask for me, I am ill and gone to bed. If I die for it, as no less is threatened me, the king, my old master, must be relieved. There is some strange thing toward, Edmund; pray you, be careful. 21

*Exit.*

*Edm.* This courtesy, forbid thee, shall the duke instantly know; and of that letter too:  
 This seems a fair deserving, and must draw me  
 That which my father loses; no less than all: 25  
The younger rises when the old doth fall. *Exit.*

14 footed: on foot

## Scene Four

[The Heath. Before a Hovel]

*Enter Lear, Kent, and Fool.*

*Kent.* Here is the place, my lord; good my lord,  
enter:

The tyranny of the open night's too rough  
For ~~nature~~ to endure.

*Storm still.*

*Lear.* Let me alone.

*Kent.* Good my lord, enter here.

*Lear.* ~~Wilt break my heart?~~ 4

*Kent.* I'd rather break mine own. Good my lord,  
enter.

*Lear.* Thou think'st 'tis much that ~~this contentious~~  
storm

Invades us to the skin: so 'tis to thee;

But where the greater malady is fix'd, 8

The lesser is scarce felt. Thou'dst shun a bear;

But if thy flight lay toward the roaring sea,

Thou'dst meet the bear i' the mouth. When the  
mind's free

The body's delicate; the tempest in my mind 12

Doth from my senses take all feeling else

Save what beats there. Filial ingratitude!

Is it not as this mouth should tear this hand

For lifting food to 't? But I will punish home: 16

No, I will weep no more. In such a night

To shut me out! Pour on; I will endure.

In such a night as this! O Regan, Goneril!

Your old kind father, whose frank heart gave all,— 20

O! that way madness lies; let me shun that;

No more of that.

*Kent.* Good, my lord, enter here.

Lear. Prithee, go in thyself; seek thine own ease:  
This tempest will not give me leave to ponder 24

On things would hurt me more. But I'll go in.

[To the Fool.] In, boy; go first. You houseless  
poverty, —

Nay, get thee in. I'll pray, and then I'll sleep.

[Fool goes in.]

Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are, 28

That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm, —

How shall your houseless heads and unfed sides,

Your loop'd and window'd raggedness, defend you

From seasons such as these? O! I have ta'en 32

Too little care of this. Take physic, pomp;

Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel,

That thou mayst shake the superflux to them,

And show the heavens more just. 36

Edg. [Within.] Fathom and half, fathom and half!

Poor Tom!

[The Fool runs out from the hovel.]

Fool. Come not in here, nuncle; here's a spirit.

Help me! help me!

Kent. Give me thy hand. Who's there? 40

Fool. A spirit, a spirit: he says his name's poor

Tom.

Kent. What art thou that dost grumble there i'  
the straw?

Come forth.

[Enter Edgar disguised as a madman.]

Edg. Away! the foul fiend follows me! 44

Through the sharp hawthorn blow the winds.

Hum! go to thy cold bed and warm thee.

Lear. Didst thou give all to thy two daughters?

~~And art thou come to this?~~ 48

31 loop'd: full of holes

35 superflux: excess

*Edg.* Who gives anything to poor Tom? whom the foul fiend hath led through fire and through flame, through ford and whirlpool, o'er bog and quagmire; that hath laid knives under his pillow, and halters in his pew; set ratsbane by his porridge; made him proud of heart, to ride on a bay trotting-horse over four-inched bridges, ~~to~~ to course his own shadow for a traitor.

*Bless thy five wits! Tom's a-cold. O! do de, do de, do de. Bless thee from whirlwinds, star-blasting, and taking! Do poor Tom some charity, whom the foul fiend vexes. There could I have him now, and there, and there again, and there.*

*Storm still.*

*Lear.* What! have his daughters brought him to this pass?

Could'st thou save nothing? Didst thou give them all?

*Fool.* Nay, he reserved a blanket, else we had been all shamed. 65

*Lear.* Now all the plagues that in the pendulous air

Hang fated o'er men's faults light on thy daughters!

*Kent.* He hath no daughters, sir. 68

*Lear.* Death, traitor, nothing could have subdu'd nature

To such a lowness, but his unkind daughters.

Is it the fashion that discarded fathers

Should have thus little mercy on their flesh? 72

Judicious punishment! 'twas this flesh begot

Those pelican daughters.

49 Who gives, etc.; cf. n.  
66 pendulous: overhanging

59 taking: influence of malignant powers  
74 pelican; cf. n.

*Edg.* Pillicock sat on Pillicock-hill:  
Halloo, halloo, loo, loo!

76

*Fool.* This cold night will turn us all to fools  
and madmen.

*Edg.* Take heed o' the foul fiend. Obey thy  
parents; keep thy word justly; swear not; com-  
mit not with man's sworn spouse; set not thy  
sweet heart on proud array. Tom's a-cold. 82

*Lear.* What hast thou been?

*Edg.* A servingman, proud in heart and  
mind; that curled my hair, wore gloves in my  
cap, served the lust of my mistress's heart, and  
did the act of darkness with her; swore as many  
oaths as I spake words, and broke them in the  
sweet face of heaven; one that slept in the con-  
triving of lust, and waked to do it. Wine loved  
I deeply, dice dearly, and in woman out-para-  
moured the Turk: false of heart, light of ear,  
bloody of hand; hog in sloth, fox in stealth,  
wolf in greediness, dog in madness, lion in prey.  
Let not the creaking of shoes nor the rustling of  
silks betray thy poor heart to woman: keep thy  
foot out of brothels, thy hand out of plackets,  
thy pen from lenders' books, and defy the foul  
fiend. Still through the hawthorn blows the  
cold wind; says suum, mun ha no nonny.  
Dolphin my boy, my boy; sessa! let him  
trot by.

*Storm still,*

*Lear.* Why, thou wert better in thy grave  
than to answer with thy uncovered body this  
extremity of the skies. Is man no more than  
this? Consider him well. Thou owest the worm

97 plackets: *the slit in a woman's skirt*

100 suum, mun, etc.: *probably mere nonsensical exclamations*



no silk, the beast no hide, the sheep no wool, the cat no perfume. Ha! here's three on 's are sophisticated; thou art the thing itself; unaccommodated man is no more but such a poor, bare, forked animal as thou art. Off, off, you lendings! Come; unbutton here. 112

[Tearing off his clothes.]

*Fool.* Prithee, nuncle, be contented; 'tis a naughty night to swim in. Now a little fire in a wide field were like an old lecher's heart; a small spark, all the rest on 's body cold. Look! here comes a walking fire. 117

*Enter Gloucester with a torch.*

*Edg.* This is the foul fiend Flibbertigibbet: he begins at curfew, and walks till the first cock; he gives the web and the pin, squints the eye, and makes the harelip; mildews the white wheat, and hurts the poor creature of earth. 122

Swithold footed thrice the old;

He met the night-mare, and her nine-fold;

Bid her alight,

And her troth plight,

And aroint thee, witch, aroint thee!

*Kent.* How fares your Grace? 128

*Lear.* What 's he?

*Kent.* Who 's there? What is 't you seek?

*Glo.* What are you there? Your names?

*Edg.* Poor Tom; that eats the swimming frog; the toad, the tadpole, the wall-newt, and the water; that in the fury of his heart, when

108 cat: civet-cat

120 web and the pin: eye-disease

123 Swithold: *St. Withold, St. Vitalis*

127 aroint: get out!

118 Flibbertigibbet: name of a demon

old: wold

133 wall-newt: lizard

the foul fiend rages, eats cow-dung for sallets;  
 swallows the old rat and the ditch-dog; drinks  
 the green mantle of the standing pool; who is  
 whipped from tithing to tithing, and stock-  
 punished, and imprisoned; who hath had three  
 suits to his back, six shirts to his body, horse to  
 ride, and weapon to wear. 141

But mice and rats and such small deer  
 Have been Tom's food for seven long year.  
 Beware my follower. Peace, Smulkin! peace,  
 thou fiend. 145

*Glo.* What! hath your Grace no better company?

*Edg.* The prince of darkness is a gentleman;  
 Modo he's call'd, and Mahu.

~~*Glo.* Our flesh and blood, my lord, is grown so vile,  
 That it doth hate what gets it. 150~~

*Edg.* Poor Tom's a-cold.

*Glo.* Go in with me. My duty cannot suffer  
 To obey in all your daughters' hard commands:  
Though their injunction be to bar my doors, 154  
And let this tyrannous night take hold upon you,  
 Yet have I ventur'd to come seek you out 156  
 And bring you where both fire and food is ready.

*Lear.* First let me talk with this philosopher.  
 What is the cause of thunder?

*Kent.* Good my lord, take his offer; go into the  
 house. 160

*Lear.* I'll talk a word with this same learned  
 Theban.

What is your study?

*Edg.* How to prevent the fiend, and to kill vermin.

*Lear.* Let me ask you one word in private.

135 sallets: *salads*    136 ditch-dog: *dead dogs thrown away in ditches*  
 138 tithing: *district*  
 142 deer: *beast, German 'tier'*    144 Smulkin; *cf. n.*

*Kent.* Importune him once more to go, my lord; 165  
His wits begin to unsettle.

*Glo.* ~~Canst thou blame him? Storm still.~~  
~~His daughters seek his death. Ah! that good Kent;~~  
~~He said it would be thus, poor banish'd man!~~

Thou sayst the king grows mad; I'll tell thee,  
friend, 169

~~I am almost mad myself. I had a son,~~  
~~Now outlaw'd from my blood; he sought my life,~~  
~~But lately, very late; I lov'd him, friend,~~ 172  
~~No father his son dearer; true to tell thee,~~  
~~The grief hath craz'd my wits. What a night 's~~  
this!

I do beseech your Grace,—

*Lear.* O! cry you mercy, sir.

Noble philosopher, your company. 176

*Edg.* Tom's a-cold.

*Glo.* In, fellow, there, into the hovel: keep thee  
warm.

*Lear.* Come, let's in all.

*Kent.* This way, my lord.

*Lear.* With him;

I will keep still with my philosopher. 180

*Kent.* Good my lord, soothe him; let him take the  
fellow.

*Glo.* Take him you on.

*Kent.* Sirrah, come on; go along with us.

*Lear.* Come, good Athenian.

*Glo.* No words, no words: hush.

*Edg.* Child Rowland to the dark tower came,

His word was still, Fie, foh, and fum,

I smell the blood of a British man. 187

*Exeunt.*

## Scene Five

[Gloucester's Castle]

*Enter Cornwall and Edmund.*

*Corn.* I will have my revenge ere I depart his house.

*Edm.* How, my lord, I may be censured, that nature thus gives way to loyalty, something fears me to think of.

*Corn.* I now perceive it was not altogether your brother's evil disposition made him seek his death; but a provoking merit, set a-work by a reproveable badness in himself.

*Edm.* How malicious is my fortune, that I must repent to be just! This is the letter he spoke of, which approves him an intelligent party to the advantages of France. O heavens! that this treason were not, or not I the detector!

*Corn.* Go with me to the duchess.

*Edm.* If the matter of this paper be certain, you have mighty business in hand.

*Corn.* True, or false, it hath made thee Earl of Gloucester. Seek out where thy father is, that he may be ready for our apprehension.

*Edm.* [Aside.] If I find him comforting the king, it will stuff his suspicion more fully.—I will persevere in my course of loyalty, though the conflict be sore between that and my blood.

*Corn.* I will lay trust upon thee; and thou shalt find a dearer father in my love. *Exeunt.*

3 censured: *judged*4 something fears: *somewhat frightens*8 provoking: *urging*

## Scene Six

[A Chamber in a Farmhouse adjoining the Castle]

Enter Gloucester, [Lear,] Kent, [Fool, and  
Edgar.]

Glo. Here is better than the open air; take it thankfully. I will piece out the comfort with what addition I can: I will not be long from you. Exit. 4

Kent. All the power of his wits has given way to his impatience. The gods reward your kindness!

Edg. Frateretto calls me, and tells me Nero is an angler in the lake of darkness. Pray, innocent, and beware the foul fiend.

Fool. Prithee, nuncle, tell me whether a madman be a gentleman or a yeoman! 12

Lear. A king, a king!

Fool. No; he's a yeoman that has a gentleman to his son; for he's a mad yeoman that sees his son a gentleman before him. 16

Lear. To have a thousand with red burning spits  
Come hissing in upon 'em,—

[Edg. The foul fiend bites my back.

Fool. He's mad that trusts in the tameness of a wolf, a horse's health, a boy's love, or a whore's oath.

Lear. It shall be done; ~~I will arraign them straight.~~

[To Edgar.] Come, sit thou here, most learned justicer; 24

[To the Fool.] Thou, sapient sir, sit here. Now, you she foxes!

*Edg.* Look, where he stands and glares!  
wanteſt thou eyes at trial, madam?

Come o'er the bourn, Bessy, to me,— 28

*Fool.* Her boat hath a leak,

And ſhe muſt not ſpeak

Why ſhe dares not come over to thee.

*Edg.* The foul fiend haunts poor Tom in the  
voice of a nightingale. Hopdance cries in Tom's  
belly for two white herring. Croak not, black  
angel; I have no food for thee.

*Kent.* How do you, ſir? Stand you not ſo  
amaz'd: 36

Will you lie down and reſt upon the cuſhions?

*Lear.* I'll ſee their trial firſt. Bring in their  
evidence.

[*To Edgar.*] Thou robed man of juſtice, take thy  
place;

[*To the Fool.*] And thou, his yoke-fellow of equity, 40  
Bench by his ſide. [*To Kent.*] You are o' the  
commiſſion,

Sit you too.

*Edg.* Let us deal juſtly.

Sleepeſt or wakeſt thou, jolly ſhepherd? 44

Thy ſheep be in the corn;

And for one blaſt of thy minikin mouth,

Thy ſheep ſhall take no harm.

Purr! the cat is grey. 48

*Lear.* Arraign her firſt; 'tis Goneril. I here  
take my oath before this honourable aſſembly,  
ſhe kicked the poor king her father.

*Fool.* Come hither, miſtreſs. Is your name  
Goneril? 53

28 Come, etc.; cf. n.

46 minikin: *mignonne*, pretty

36 amaz'd: *confused*

*Lear.* She cannot deny it.

*Fool.* Cry you mercy, I took you for a joint-stool.

*Lear.* And here's another, whose warp'd looks  
proclaim 56

What store her heart is made on. Stop her there!  
Arms, arms, sword, fire! Corruption in the place!  
False justicer, why hast thou let her 'scape?]

*Edg.* Bless thy five wits! 60

*Kent.* O pity! Sir, where is the patience now  
That you so oft have boasted to retain?

*Edg.* [*Aside.*] My tears begin to take his part  
so much,

They'll mar my counterfeiting. 64

*Lear.* The little dogs and all,

Tray, Blanch, and Sweet-heart, see, they bark at me.

*Edg.* Tom will throw his head at them.

Avaunt, you curs! 68

Be thy mouth or black or white,

Tooth that poisons if it bite;

Mastiff, greyhound, mongrel grim,

Hound or spaniel, brach or lym; 72

Or bobtail tike or trundle-tail;

Tom will make them weep and wail:

For, with throwing thus my head,

Dogs leap the hatch, and all are fled. 76

Do de, de, de. Sessa! Come, march to wakes  
and fairs and market-towns. Poor Tom, thy  
horn is dry. 79

*Lear.* Then let them anatomize Regan, see  
what breeds about her heart. Is there any cause  
in nature that makes these hard hearts? [*To*

55 joint-stool; cf. n.

73 tike: cur trundle-tail: curly tail

76 hatch: lower half of the house-door

77 wakes: church consecrations

72 lym: leash-hound

*Edgar.*] You, sir, I entertain you for one of my hundred; only I do not like the fashion of your garments: you will say, they are Persian attire; but let them be changed.

*Kent.* Now, good my lord, lie here and rest awhile. 88

*Lear.* ~~Make no noise, make no noise; draw the curtains: so, so, so. We'll go to supper i' the morning: so, so, so.~~

*Fool.* And I'll go to bed at noon. 92

*Enter Gloucester.*

*Glo.* Come hither, friend: where is the king my master?

*Kent.* Here, sir; but trouble him not, his wits are gone. 96

*Glo.* Good friend, I prithee, take him in thy arms; I have o'erheard a plot of death upon him.

~~There is a litter ready; lay him in't, And drive toward Dover, friend, where thou shalt meet~~ 100

Both welcome and protection. Take up thy master: If thou shouldst dally half an hour, his life,

~~With thine, and all that offer to defend him, Stand in assured loss.~~ Take up; take up; 104

And follow me, that will to some provision Give thee quick conduct.

[*Kent.* Oppress'd nature sleeps:

This rest might yet have balm'd thy broken sinews, Which, if convenience will not allow, 108

Stand in hard cure.—[*To the Fool.*] Come, help to bear thy master;

83 entertain: employ

104 in assured loss: sure to be lost

106 conduct: guidance

92 noon; cf. n.

109 in hard cure: hard to cure



Thou must not stay behind.

*Glo.*]

Come, come, away.

*Exeunt [all but Edgar.]*

[*Edg.* When we our betters see bearing our woes,  
We scarcely think our miseries our foes. 112

Who alone suffers suffers most i' the mind,  
Leaving free things and happy shows behind;  
But then the mind much sufferance doth o'erskip,  
When grief hath mates, and bearing fellowship. 116

How light and portable my pain seems now,

When that ~~which makes me bend~~ makes the king bow;  
He childed as I father'd! Tom, away!

Mark the high noises, and thyself bewray 120

When false opinion, whose wrong thought defiles thee,  
In thy just proof repeals and reconciles thee.

What will hap more to-night, safe 'scape the king!

Lurk, lurk.] [*Exit.*]

### Scene Seven

[*Gloucester's Castle*]

*Enter Cornwall, Regan, Goneril, Bastard [Edmund]  
and Servants.*

*Corn.* Post speedily to my lord your husband;  
show him this letter: the army of France is  
landed. Seek out the traitor Gloucester.

[*Exeunt some of the Servants.*]

*Reg.* Hang him instantly. 4

*Gon.* Pluck out his eyes.

*Corn.* Leave him to my displeasure. Edmund,  
keep you our sister company: the revenges we  
are bound to take upon your traitorous father

116 bearing: *suffering*

120 high noises: *great tumults*

123 What . . . more: *whatever else*

117 portable: *endurable*

122 repeals: *recalls*

are not fit for your beholding. Advise the duke,  
where you are going, to a most festinate prepara-  
tion: we are bound to the like. Our posts shall  
be swift and intelligent betwixt us. Farewell,  
dear sister: farewell, my Lord of Gloucester. 13

*Enter Steward [Oswald.]*

How now? Where's the king?

*Osw.* My Lord of Gloucester hath convey'd him  
hence:

Some five or six and thirty of his knights, 16  
Hot questrists after him, met him at gate;  
Who, with some other of the lord's dependants,  
Are gone with him toward Dover, where they boast  
To have well-armed friends.

*Corn.* Get horses for your mistress. 20

*Gon.* Farewell, sweet lord, and sister.

*Corn.* Edmund, farewell.

*[Exeunt Goneril, Edmund, and Oswald.]*

*Go seek the traitor Gloucester,*

Pinion him like a thief, bring him before us.

*[Exeunt other Servants.]*

Though well we may not pass upon his life 24

Without the form of justice, yet our power  
Shall do a courtesy to our wrath, which men  
May blame but not control. Who's there? The  
traitor?

*Enter Gloucester, and Servants.*

*Reg.* Ingrateful fox! 'tis he. 28

*Corn.* Bind fast his corky arms.

*Glo.* What mean your Graces? Good my friends,  
consider

You are my guests: do me no foul play, friends.

Corn. Bind him, I say. [Servants bind him.]

Reg. Hard, hard. O filthy traitor!

Glo. Unmerciful lady as you are, I'm none. 33

Corn. To this chair bind him. Villain, thou shalt  
find— [Regan plucks his beard.]

Glo. By the kind gods, 'tis most ignobly done  
To pluck me by the beard. 36

Reg. So white, and such a traitor!

Glo. Naughty lady,  
These hairs, which thou dost ravish from my chin,  
Will quicken, 'and accuse thee: I am your host:  
With robbers' hands my hospitable favours 40  
You should not ruffle thus. What will you do?

Corn. Come, sir, what letters had you late from  
France?

Reg. Be simple-answer'd, for we know the truth.

Corn. And what confederacy have you with the  
traitors 44

Late footed in the kingdom?

Reg. To whose hands have you sent the lunatic  
king?

Speak.

Glo. I have a letter guessingly set down, 48  
Which came from one that's of a neutral heart,  
And not from one oppos'd.

Corn. Cunning.

Reg. And false.

Corn. Where hast thou sent the king?

Glo. To Dover.

Reg. Wherefore to Dover? Wast thou not charg'd  
at peril— 52

Corn. Wherefore to Dover? Let him answer that.

37 Naughty: wicked 40 hospitable favours: features of the host  
48 guessingly: expressed in conjectural language

*Glo.* I am tied to the stake, and I must stand the course.

*Reg.* Wherefore to Dover? 55

*Glo.* Because I would not see thy cruel nails  
Pluck out his poor old eyes; nor thy fierce sister  
In his anointed flesh stick boarish fangs.  
 The sea, with such a storm as his bare head  
 In hell-black night endur'd, would have buoy'd up, 60  
 And quench'd the stelled fires;  
 Yet, poor old heart, he help the heavens to rain.  
 If wolves had at thy gate howl'd that dern time,  
 Thou shouldst have said, 'Good porter, turn the  
 key,'

All cruels else subscrib'd: ~~but I shall see~~  
The winged vengeance overtake such children.

*Corn.* See 't shalt thou never. Fellows, hold the chair.

Upon these eyes of thine I'll set my foot. 68

*Glo.* He that will think to live till he be old,  
 Give me some help! O cruel! O ye gods!

[*Gloucester's eye put out.*]

*Reg.* One side will mock another; the other too.

*Corn.* If you see vengeance—

*First Serv.* Hold your hand, my lord:  
I have serv'd you ever since I was a child, 73  
But better service have I never done you  
Than now to bid you hold.

*Reg.* How now, you dog!

*First Serv.* If you did wear a beard upon your  
 chin, 76  
 I'd shake it on this quarrel. What do you mean?

*Corn.* My villain! [Draws.]

54 course: an attack in the sport of bear-baiting

61 stelled fires: fixed stars

65 cruels; cf. n.

63 dern: dark  
 78 villain: servant

*First Serv.* Nay then, come on, and take the chance  
of anger. [Draws. They fight.

*Cornwall is wounded.]*

*Reg.* Give me thy sword. A peasant stand up thus!

*Kills him.*

*First Serv.* O! I am slain. My lord, you have one  
eye left 81

To see some mischief on him. O!

*Corn.* Lest it see more, prevent it. Out, vile jelly!  
Where is thy lustre now? 84

*Glo.* All dark and comfortless. Where's my son  
Edmund?

Edmund, enkindle all the sparks of nature,  
To quit this horrid act.

*Reg.* Out, treacherous villain!

Thou call'st on him that hates thee; it was he  
That made the overture of thy treasons to us, 89  
Who is too good to pity thee.

*Glo.* O my follies! Then Edgar was abus'd.  
Kind gods, forgive me that, and prosper him! 92

*Reg.* Go thrust him out at gates, and let him smell  
His way to Dover. Exit [one] with Gloucester.

How is 't, my lord? How look you?

*Corn.* I have receiv'd a hurt. Follow me, lady.  
Turn out that eyeless villain; throw this slave  
Upon the dunghill. Regan, I bleed apace: 97  
Untimely comes this hurt. Give me your arm.

[Exit Cornwall led by Regan.]

[*Sec. Serv.* I'll never care what wickedness I do  
If this man come to good.

*Third Serv.* If she live long, 100  
And, in the end, meet the old course of death,  
Women will all turn monsters.

87 quit: requite

89 overture: exposure

101 old: familiar, regular

*Sec. Serv.* Let's follow the old earl, and get the  
Bedlam  
 To lead him where he would: his roguish mad-  
ness 104

Allows itself to any thing.

*Third Serv.* Go thou; I'll fetch some flax, and  
 whites of eggs,  
 To apply to his bleeding face. Now, heaven help  
 him! *Exeunt severally.*

ACT FOURTH

Scene One

[*The Heath*]

*Enter Edgar.*

*Edg.* ~~Yet better thus, and known to be contemn'd,~~  
~~Than still contemn'd and flatter'd.~~ To be worst,  
 The lowest and most dejected thing of fortune,  
 Stands still in esperance, lives not in fear:  
 The lamentable change is from the best;  
 The worst returns to laughter. Welcome, then,  
 Thou unsubstantial air that I embrace:  
 The wretch that thou hast blown unto the worst  
 Owes nothing to thy blasts. But who comes here? 9

*Enter Gloucester, and an old man.*

My father, poorly led? World, world, O world!  
~~But that thy strange mutations make us hate thee,~~  
 Life would not yield to age.

*Old Man.*

O my good lord! 12

4 esperance: *hope*

11 mutations; *cf. n.*

I have been your tenant, and your father's tenant,  
These fourscore years.

*Glo.* Away, get thee away; good friend, be gone;  
Thy comforts can do me no good at all; 16  
Thee they may hurt.

*Old Man.* You cannot see your way.

*Glo.* ~~I have no way, and therefore want no eyes;~~  
~~I stumbled when I saw.~~ Full oft 'tis seen,  
Our means secure us, and our mere defects 20  
Prove our commodities. Ah! dear son Edgar,  
The food of thy abused father's wrath;  
Might I but live to see thee in my touch,  
I'd say I had eyes again.

*Old Man.* How now! Who's there? 24

*Edg.* [*Aside.*] O gods! Who is 't can say, 'I am at  
'the worst?'

I am worse than e'er I was.

*Old Man.* 'Tis poor mad Tom.

*Edg.* [*Aside.*] And worse I may be yet; the worst  
is not,

So long as we can say, 'This is the worst.' 28

*Old Man.* Fellow, where goest?

*Glo.* Is it a beggar-man?

*Old Man.* Madman and beggar too.

*Glo.* He has some reason, else he could not beg.

I' the last night's storm I such a fellow saw, 32

Which made me think a man a worm; my son

Came then into my mind; and yet my mind

Was then scarce friends with him: I have heard more  
since.

As flies to wanton boys, are we to the gods; 36

They kill us for their sport.

*Edg.* [*Aside.*] How should this be?

Bad is the trade that must play fool to sorrow,  
Angering itself and others.—[*To Gloucester.*] Bless  
thee, master!

*Glo.* Is that the naked fellow?

*Old Man.*

Ay, my lord.

*Glo.* Then, prithee, get thee gone. If, for my  
sake, 41

Thou wilt o'ertake us, hence a mile or twain,  
I' the way toward Dover, do it for ancient love;  
~~And bring some covering for this naked soul~~ 44  
~~Who I'll entreat to lead me.~~

*Old Man.*

Alack, sir! he is mad.

*Glo.* ~~'Tis the times' plague, when madmen lead the  
blind.~~

Do as I bid thee, or rather do thy pleasure;  
Above the rest, be gone. 48

*Old Man.* ~~I'll bring him the best 'parrel that I have,  
Come on 't what will.~~ *Exit.*

*Glo.* Sirrah, naked fellow,—

*Edg.* Poor Tom's a-cold. [*Aside.*] I cannot daub  
it further. 52

*Glo.* Come hither, fellow.

*Edg.* [*Aside.*] And yet I must. Bless thy sweet  
eyes, they bleed.

*Glo.* Know'st thou the way to Dover? 55

*Edg.* Both stile and gate, horse-way and foot-  
path. Poor Tom hath been scared out of his  
good wits: bless thee, good man's son, from the  
foul fiend! [Five fiends have been in poor Tom  
at once; of lust, as Obidicut; Hobbididance,  
prince of dumbness; Mahu, of stealing; Modo,  
of murder; and Flibbertigibbet, of mopping and

52 daub: *overpaint reality*

62 mopping and mowing: *making grimaces*



mowing; who since possesses chambermaids  
and waiting-women. So, bless thee, master!] 64

*Glo.* Here, take this purse, thou whom the heavens'  
plagues

Have humbled to all strokes: that I am wretched  
Makes thee the happier: heavens, deal so still!

Let the superfluous and lust-dieted man, 68

That slaves your ordinance, that will not see  
Because he doth not feel, feel your power quickly;

~~So distribution should undo excess,~~

And each man have enough. Dost thou know  
Dover? 72

*Edg.* Ay, master.

*Glo.* There is a cliff, whose high and bending head

Looks fearfully in the confined deep;

Bring me but to the very brim of it, 76

And I'll repair the misery thou dost bear

With something rich about me; from that place

I shall no leading need.

*Edg.*

Give me thy arm:

Poor Tom shall lead thee,

*Exeunt.*

### Scene Two

[*Before the Duke of Albany's Palace*]

*Enter Goneril, Bastard [Edmund], and  
Steward [Oswald].*

*Gon.* Welcome, my lord; I marvel our mild husband  
Not met us on the way. Now, where's your master?

*Osw.* Madam, within; but never man so chang'd.  
I told him of the army that was landed; 4  
He smil'd at it: I told him you were coming;

69 slaves: makes a slave of  
72 Dover; cf. n.

ordinance: divine dispensation

His answer was, 'The worse:' of Gloucester's  
 treachery,

And of the loyal service of his son,  
 When I inform'd him, then he call'd me sot, 8  
 And told me I had turn'd the wrong side out:  
 What most he should dislike seems pleasant to him;  
 What like, offensive.

Gon. [To Edmund.] Then, shall you go no further.  
 It is the cowish terror of his spirit 12

That dares not undertake; he'll not feel wrongs  
 Which tie him to an answer. Our wishes on the way  
May prove effects. Back, Edmund, to my brother;  
 Hasten his musters and conduct his powers: 16  
 I must change arms at home, and give the distaff  
 Into my husband's hands. This trusty servant  
 Shall pass between us; ere long you are like to hear,  
 If you dare venture in your own behalf, 20  
A mistress's command. Wear this; spare speech;

[Giving a favour.]

Decline your head; this kiss, if it durst speak,  
Would stretch thy spirits up into the air.

Conceive, and fare thee well. 24

Edm. Yours in the ranks of death. Exit.

Gon. My most dear Gloucester!

O! the difference of man and man!

To thee a woman's services are due:

My fool usurps my bed.

Osw. Madam, here comes my lord. [Exit.]

Enter Albany.

Gon. I have been worth the whistle.

Alb. O Goneril! 29

You are not worth the dust which the rude wind

12 cowish: easily cowed  
 14 tie him to: require

29 worth the whistle; cf. n.

Blows in your face. [I fear your disposition:  
 That nature which contemns its origin, 32  
 Cannot be border'd certain in itself;  
 She that herself will sliver and disbranch  
 From her material sap, perforce must wither  
 And come to deadly use. 36

*Gon.* No more; the text is foolish.

*Alb.* Wisdom and goodness to the vile seem vile;  
 Filths savour but themselves. What have you done?  
 Tigers, not daughters, what have you perform'd?  
 A father, and a gracious aged man, 41  
 Whose reverence the head-lugg'd bear would lick,  
Most barbarous, most degenerate! have you madd'd.

Could my good brother suffer you to do it? 44  
 A man, a prince, by him so benefited!  
If that the heavens do not their visible spirits  
Send quickly down to tame these vile offences,  
It will come. 48  
Humanity must perforce prey on itself,  
Like monsters of the deep.]

*Gon.* Milk-liver'd man!

That bear'st a cheek for blows, a head for wrongs;  
Who hast not in thy brows an eye discerning 52  
 Thine honour from thy suffering; [that not know'st  
 Fools do those villains pity who are punish'd  
 Ere they have done their mischief. Where's thy  
 drum?

France spreads his banners in our noiseless land, 56  
 With plumed helm thy slayer begins threats,  
 Whilst thou, a moral foo, sitt'st still, and criest  
 'Alack! why does he so?']

*Alb.* See thyself, devil!

31 fear: *fear for*

42 head-lugg'd: *led about by a muzzle*

54 Fools, etc.; *cf. n.*

34 sliver: *break off*

58 moral: *moralising*

Proper deformity seems not in the fiend 60  
So horrid as in woman.

Gon. O vain fool!

[Alb. Thou changed and self-cover'd thing, for  
shame,

Be-monster not thy feature. Were 't my fitness  
To let these hands obey my blood, 64

They are apt enough to dislocate and tear  
Thy flesh and bones; how'er thou art a fiend,  
A woman's shape doth shield thee.

Gon. Marry, your manhood.—Mew!] 68

*Enter a Messenger.*

[Alb. What news?]

Mess. O! my good lord, the Duke of Cornwall's  
dead;

Slain by his servant, going to put out  
The other eye of Gloucester.

Alb. Gloucester's eyes! 72

Mess. A servant that he bred, ~~thrill'd with remorse,~~  
Oppos'd against the act, bending his sword  
To his great master; who, thereat enrag'd,  
Flew on him, and amongst them fell'd him dead; 76  
But not without that harmful stroke, which since  
Hath pluck'd him after.

Alb. This shows you are above,  
You justicers, that these our nether crimes  
So speedily can venge! But, O poor Gloucester!  
Lost he his other eye?

Mess. Both, both, my lord. 81  
This letter, madam, craves a speedy answer;

60 Proper: *that which belongs*

61 vain: *empty*

62 self-cover'd: *hypocritical*  
63 Be-monster not thy feature: *don't let your whole appearance be-*  
*come beastly*

65 apt: *ready*

73 remorse: *pity*

'Tis from your sister.

*Gon.* [Aside.] One way I like this well;  
But being widow, and my Gloucester with her,  
May all the building in my fancy pluck 85  
Upon my hateful life; another way,  
This news is not so tart. [To Messenger.] I'll read  
and answer. [Exit.]

*Alb.* Where was his son when they did take his  
eyes? 88

*Mess.* Come with my lady hither.

*Alb.* He is not here.

*Mess.* No, my good lord; I met him back again.

*Alb.* Knows he the wickedness?

*Mess.* Ay, my good lord; 'twas he inform'd against  
him, 92

~~And quit the house on purpose that their punishment  
Might have the freer course.~~

*Alb.* Gloucester, I live  
To thank thee for the love thou show'dst the king,  
And to revenge thine eyes. Come hither, friend:  
'Tell me what more thou knowest. *Exeunt.*

[Scene Three

*The French Camp, near Dover*

*Enter Kent and a Gentleman.*

*Kent.* Why the King of France is so suddenly  
gone back know you the reason?

*Gent.* Something he left imperfect in the  
state, which since his coming forth is thought  
of; which imports to the kingdom so much fear  
and danger, that his personal return was most  
required and necessary. 7

*Kent.* Who hath he left behind him general?

*Gent.* The Marshal of France, Monsieur la Far.

*Kent.* Did your letters pierce the queen to any demonstration of grief? 12

*Gent.* Ay, sir; she took them, read them in my presence;

And now and then an ample tear trill'd down  
Her delicate cheek; it seem'd she was a queen  
Over her passion; who, most rebel-like, 16  
Sought to be king o'er her.

*Kent.* O! then it mov'd her.

*Gent.* Not to a rage; patience and sorrow strove  
Who should express her goodliest. You have seen  
Sunshine and rain at once; her smiles and tears  
Were like a better way; those happy smilets 21  
That play'd on her ripe lip seem'd not to know  
What guests were in her eyes; which parted thence,  
As pearls from diamonds dropp'd. In brief, 24  
Sorrow would be a rarity most belov'd,  
If all could so become it.

*Kent.* Made she no verbal question?

*Gent.* Faith, once or twice she heav'd the name of  
'father'

Pantingly forth, as if it press'd her heart; 28  
Cried, 'Sisters! sisters! Shame of ladies! sisters!  
Kent! father! sisters! What, i' the storm? i' the night?  
Let pity not be believed!' There she shook  
The holy water from her heavenly eyes, 32  
And clamour-moisten'd, then away she started  
To deal with grief alone.

*Kent.* It is the stars,  
The stars above us, govern our conditions;

16 who: *which* 21 better way: *like sunshine and rain, but even better*  
26 verbal question: *oral conversation*  
33 clamour-moisten'd: *wet with lamentation*

Else one self mate and make could not beget 36  
 Such different issues. You spoke not with her since?

Gent. No.

Kent. Was this before the king return'd?

Gent. No, since.

Kent. Well, sir, the poor distress'd Lear's i' the  
 town, 40

Who sometime, in his better tune, remembers  
 What we are come about, and by no means  
 Will yield to see his daughter.

Gent. Why, good sir?

Kent. A sovereign shame so elbows him: his own  
 unkindness, 44

That stripp'd her from his benediction, turn'd her  
 To foreign casualties, gave her dear rights  
 To his dog-hearted daughters,—these things sting  
 His mind so venomously that burning shame  
 Detains him from Cordelia.

Gent. Alack! poor gentleman. 49

Kent. Of Albany's and Cornwall's powers you  
 heard not?

Gent. 'Tis so, they are afoot.

Kent. Well, sir, I'll bring you to our master  
 Lear, 52

And leave you to attend him. Some dear cause  
 Will in concealment wrap me up awhile;  
 When I am known aright, you shall not grieve  
 Lending me this acquaintance. I pray you, go  
 Along with me. *Exeunt.*]

36 mate and make: *husband and wife*

46 To foreign casualties: *to take chances among foreigners*

## Scene Four

[The Same. A Tent]

Enter with drum and colours, Cordelia, Gentlemen,  
[Doctor] and Soldiers.

Cor. Alack! 'tis he: why, he was met even now  
As mad as the vex'd sea; singing aloud;  
Crown'd with rank fumiter and furrow weeds,  
With burdocks, hemlock, nettles, cuckoo-flowers,  
Darnel, and all the idle weeds that grow  
In our sustaining corn. A century send forth;  
Search every acre in the high-grown field,  
And bring him to our eye. [Exit an Officer.]

bitter  
herbent  
upside  
weeds

What can man's wisdom 8

In the restoring his bereaved sence?

He that helps him take all my outward worth.

[Doc.] There is means, madam;  
Our foster-nurse of nature is repose, 12  
The which he lacks; that to provoke in him,  
Are many simples operative, whose power  
Will close the eye of anguish.

Cor. All bless'd secrets,  
All you unpublish'd virtues of the earth, 16  
Spring with my tears! be aidant and remediate  
In the good man's distress! Seek, seek for him,  
Lest his ungovern'd rage dissolve the life  
That wants the means to lead it.

Enter Messenger.

Mess. News, madam; 20  
The British powers are marching hitherward.

- 3 fumiter: fumitory, plant with bitter taste  
4 cuckoo-flowers: the ragged robin, a marsh plant  
5 Darnel: a weed, injurious to growing crops  
6 century: company of one hundred men  
14 simples: medicinal plants  
17 aidant and remediate: aiding and remedial  
idle: worthless



*Cor.* 'Tis known before; our preparation stands  
 In expectation of them. O dear father!  
 It is thy business that I go about; 24  
~~Therefore great France~~  
 My mourning and important tears hath pitied.  
 No blown ambition doth our arms incite,  
 But love, dear love, and our ag'd father's right,  
~~Soon may I hear and see him!~~ *Exeunt.*

## Scene Five

[Gloucester's Castle]

*Enter Regan and Steward [Oswald.]**Reg.* But are my brother's powers set forth?*Osw.* Ay, madam.*Reg.* Himself in person there?*Osw.* Madam, with much ado:

Your sister is the better soldier.

*Reg.* Lord Edmund spake not with your lord at home? 4*Osw.* No, madam.*Reg.* What might import my sister's letter to him?*Osw.* I know not, lady.

*Reg.* Faith, he is posted hence on serious matter. 8  
~~It was great ignorance, Gloucester's eyes being out,~~  
~~To let him live; where he arrives he moves~~  
~~All hearts against us. Edmund, I think, is gone,~~  
 In pity of his misery, to dispatch 12  
 His nighted life; moreover, to descry  
 The strength o' the enemy.

*Osw.* I must needs after him, madam, with my letter.

26 important: importunate

*Recall  
herbers cut  
do command*

*Reg.* Our troops set forth to-morrow; stay with  
us, 16

The ways are dangerous.

*Osw.* I may not, madam;  
My lady charg'd my duty in this business.

*Reg.* Why should she write to Edmund? Might  
not you

Transport her purposes by word? Belike, 20  
Something—I know not what. I'll love thee much,  
Let me unseal the letter.

*Osw.* Madam, I had rather—

*Reg.* I know your lady does not love her husband;  
I am sure of that: and at her late being here 24  
She gave strange œillades and most speaking looks  
To noble Edmund. I know you are of her bosom.

*Osw.* I, madam!

*Reg.* I speak in understanding; you are, I  
know 't: 28

Therefore I do advise you, take this note:

My lord is dead; Edmund and I have talk'd,  
And more convenient is he for my hand  
Than for your lady's. You may gather more. 32

If you do find him, pray you, give him this,  
And when your mistress hears thus much from you,  
I pray desire her call her wisdom to her:  
So, fare you well. 36

If you do chance to hear of that blind traitor,  
Preferment falls on him that cuts him off.

*Osw.* Would I could meet him, madam: I would  
show

What party I do follow.

*Reg.* Fare thee well. *Exeunt.*

## Scene Six

[*The Country near Dover*]*Enter Gloucester and Edgar.*

*Glo.* When shall I come to the top of that same hill?

*Edg.* You do climb up it now; look how we labour.

*Glo.* Methinks the ground is even.

*Edg.* Horrible steep:

Hark! do you hear the sea?

*Glo.* No, truly. 4

*Edg.* Why, then, your other senses grow imperfect  
By your eyes' anguish.

*Glo.* So may it be, indeed.

Methinks thy voice is alter'd, and thou speak'st  
In better phrase and matter than thou didst. 8

*Edg.* Y'are much deceived; in nothing am I chang'd  
But in my garments.

*Glo.* Methinks you're better spoken.

*Edg.* Come on, sir; here's the place; stand still.

How fearful 12

And dizzy 'tis to cast one's eyes so low!

The crows and choughs that wing the midway air  
Show scarce so gross as beetles; half way down  
Hangs one that gathers samphire, dreadful trade! 16  
Methinks he seems no bigger than his head.

The fishermen that walk upon the beach  
Appear like mice, and yond tall anchoring bark  
Diminish'd to her cock, her cock a buoy 20

Almost too small for sight. The murmuring surge,  
That on the unnumber'd idle pebbles chafes,

14 choughs: *bird of the crow family, jackdaw*

16 samphire: *samper, used for pickles*

20 cock: *cock-boat*

22 unnumber'd: *innumerable*

Cannot be heard so high. I'll look no more,  
Lest my brain turn, and the deficient sight 24  
Topple down headlong.

*Glo.* Set me where you stand.

*Edg.* Give me your hand; you are now within a foot  
Of the extreme verge: for all beneath the moon  
Would I not leap upright.

*Glo.* Let go my hand. 28

Here, friend, 's another purse; in it a jewel  
Well worth a poor man's taking: fairies and gods  
Prosper it with thee! Go thou further off;  
Bid me farewell, and let me hear thee going. 32

*Edg.* Now fare you well, good sir.

*Glo.* With all my heart.

*Edg.* Why I do trifle thus with his despair  
Is done to cure it.

*Glo.* O you mighty gods!

This world I do renounce, and, in your sights, 36  
Shake patiently my great affliction off;  
If I could bear it longer, and not fall  
To quarrel with your great opposeless wills,  
My snuff and loathed part of nature should 40  
Burn itself out. If Edgar live, O, bless him!  
Now, fellow, fare thee well. [*He falls forward.*]

*Edg.* Gone, sir: farewell.

[*Aside.*] And yet I know not how conceit may rob  
The treasury of life when life itself 44  
Yields to the theft; had he been where he thought  
By this had thought been past. Alive or dead?  
[*To Gloucester.*] Ho, you sir! friend! Hear you, sir?  
Speak!

Thus might he pass indeed; yet he revives. 48

24 deficient sight: *sight failing*  
40 snuff; *cf. n.*

39 opposeless: *invincible*  
43 conceit: *imagination*

What are you, sir?

*Glo.* Away and let me die.

*Edg.* Hadst thou been aught but gossamer,  
feathers, air,  
So many fathom down precipitating,  
Thou 'dst shiver'd like an egg; but thou dost  
breathe, 52  
Hast heavy substance, bleed'st not, speak'st, art  
sound.

Ten masts at each make not the altitude  
Which thou hast perpendicularly fell:  
Thy life's a miracle. Speak yet again. 56

*Glo.* But have I fallen or no?

*Edg.* From the dread summit of this chalky bourn.  
Look up a-height; the shrill-gorg'd lark so far  
Cannot be seen or heard: do but look up. 60

*Glo.* Alack! I have no eyes.

Is wretchedness depriv'd that benefit  
To end itself by death? 'Twas yet some comfort,  
When misery could beguile the tyrant's rage, 64  
And frustrate his proud will.

*Edg.* Give me your arm:

Up: so. How is 't? Feel you your legs? You stand.

*Glo.* Too well, too well.

*Edg.* This is above all strangeness.

Upon the crown o' the cliff, what thing was that  
Which parted from you?

*Glo.* A poor unfortunate beggar. 69

*Edg.* As I stood here below methought his eyes  
Were two full moons; he had a thousand noses,  
Horns whelk'd and wav'd like the enridged sea:  
It was some fiend; therefore, thou happy father,

54 at each: *one on another*  
59 shrill-gorg'd: *high-voiced*

58 bourn: *boundary*  
72 whelk'd: *twisted*

Think that the clearest gods, who make them  
honours 74

Of men's impossibilities, have preserv'd thee

*Glo.* I do remember now; henceforth I'll bear  
Affliction till it do cry out itself  
'Enough, enough,' and die. That thing you speak of  
I took it for a man; often 'twould say  
'The fiend, the fiend:' he led me to that place.

*Edg.* Bear free and patient thoughts. But who  
comes here? 81

*Enter Lear.*

The safer sense will ne'er accommodate  
His master thus.

*Lear.* No, they cannot touch me for coining;  
I am the king himself. 85

*Edg.* O thou side-piercing sight!

*Lear.* Nature's above art in that respect.  
There's your press-money. That fellow handles  
his bow like a crow-keeper: draw me a clothier's  
yard. Look, look! a mouse. Peace, peace!  
this piece of toasted cheese will do 't. There's  
my gauntlet; I'll prove it on a giant. Bring  
up the brown bills. O! well flown, bird; i' the  
clout, i' the clout: hewgh! Give the word.

*Edg.* Sweet marjoram.

*Lear.* Pass. 96

*Glo.* I know that voice.

*Lear.* Ha! Goneril, with a white beard!  
They flatter'd me like a dog, and told me I had


74 clearest gods; cf. n. 82 safer: *safer* accommodate: *equip*

88 press-money: *money given to soldiers when pressed into service*

89 crow-keeper: *scare-crow* (?) clothier's yard: *cloth-yard shaft,*  
*used with long bow; cf. n.*

93 brown bills: *halberds, or, men carrying them*

94 clout: *bull's-eye, bit of white cloth used for mark in archery*



white hairs in my beard ere the black ones were there. To say 'ay' and 'no' to everything I said! 'Ay' and 'no' too was no good divinity. When the rain came to wet me once and the wind to make me chatter, when the thunder would not peace at my bidding, there I found 'em, there I smelt 'em out. Go to, they are not men o' their words: they told me I was everything; 'tis a lie, I am not ague-proof. 108

*Glo.* ~~The trick of that voice I do well remember—~~  
Is 't not the king?

*Lear.* Ay, every inch a king:  
When I do stare, see how the subject quakes.  
I pardon that man's life. What was thy cause? 112  
Adultery?

Thou shalt not die: die for adultery! No:  
The wren goes to 't, and the small gilded fly  
Does lecher in my sight. 116

Let copulation thrive; for Gloucester's bastard son  
Was kinder to his father than my daughters  
Got 'tween the lawful sheets.  
To 't luxury, pell-mell! for I lack soldiers. 120

Behold yond simpering dame,  
Whose face between her forks presageth snow;  
That minces virtue, and does shake the head  
To hear of pleasure's name; 124

The fitchew nor the soiled horse goes to 't  
With a more riotous appetite.  
Down from the waist they are Centaurs,  
Though women all above: 128

But to the girdle do the gods inherit,  
Beneath is all the fiends':

101 'ay' and 'no'; cf. n. 120 luxury: lewdness 122 forks: legs  
123 minces: makes an affected show of  
125 fitchew: polecat soiled: overfed

There's hell, there's darkness, there is the sulphurous  
pit, 131

Burning, scalding, stench, consumption; fie, fie,  
fie! pah, pah! Give me an ounce of civet, good  
apothecary, to sweeten my imagination: there's  
money for thee.

*Glo.* O! let me kiss that hand! 136

*Lear.* Let me wipe it first; it smells of mortality.

*Glo.* O ruin'd piece of nature! This great world  
Shall so wear out to naught. Dost thou know me? 139

*Lear.* I remember thine eyes well enough.

Dost thou squiny at me? No, do thy worst,  
blind Cupid; I'll not love. Read thou this  
challenge; mark but the penning of it.

*Glo.* Were all the letters suns, I could not see.

*Edg.* [*Aside.*] I would not take this from report;  
it is, 145

And my heart breaks at it.

*Lear.* Read.

*Glo.* What! with the case of eyes? 148

*Lear.* O, ho! are you there with me? No  
eyes in your head, nor no money in your purse?  
Your eyes are in a heavy case, your purse in a  
light: yet you see how this world goes. 152

*Glo.* I see it feelingly.

*Lear.* What! art mad? A man may see how  
this world goes with no eyes. Look with thine  
ears: see how yond justice rails upon yon simple  
thief. Hark, in thine ear: change places; and,  
handy-dandy, which is the justice, which is the  
thief? Thou hast seen a farmer's dog bark at a  
beggar? 160

*Glo.* Ay, sir.



*Lear.* And the creature run from the cur?  
There thou mightst behold the great image of  
authority: a dog's obey'd in office. 164

Thou rascal beadle, hold thy bloody hand!  
Why dost thou lash that whore? Strip thine own  
back;

~~Thou hotly lust'st to use her in that kind~~  
~~For which thou whipp'st her.~~ The usurer hangs the  
cozener. 168

Through tatter'd clothes small vices do appear;  
Robes and furr'd gowns hide all. Plate sin with gold,  
And the strong lance of justice hurtless breaks;  
Arm it in rags, a pigmy's straw doth pierce it.  
None does offend, none, I say none; I'll able 'em: 173  
Take that of me, my friend, who have the power  
To seal the accuser's lips. Get thee glass eyes;  
And, like a scurvy politician, seem 176  
To see the things thou dost not. Now, now, now,  
now;

Pull off my boots; harder, harder; so.

*Edg.* [*Aside.*] O! matter and impertinency mix'd;  
Reason in madness! 180

*Lear.* If thou wilt weep my fortunes, take my eyes;  
I know thee well enough; ~~thy name is Gloucester:~~  
~~Thou must be patient; we came crying hither:~~  
Thou know'st the first time that we smell the air 184  
~~We waul and cry. I will preach to thee: mark.~~

*Glo.* Alack! alack the day!

*Lear.* ~~When we are born, we cry that we are come~~  
~~To this great stage of fools.~~ This' a good block!  
It were a delicate stratagem to shoe 189  
A troop of horse with felt; I'll put it in proof,

173 able: *be responsible for*  
185 waul: *caterwaul*

179 impertinency: *irrelevant talk*  
188 This': *this is* block: *hat*

And when I have stol'n upon these sons-in-law,  
Then, kill, kill, kill, kill, kill, kill! 192

*Enter a Gentleman, [with Attendants.]*

*Gent.* O! here he is; lay hand upon him. Sir,  
Your most dear daughter—

*Lear.* No rescue? What! a prisoner? I am even  
~~The natural fool of fortune.~~ Use me well; 196  
~~You shall have ransom.~~ Let me have surgeons;  
I am cut to the brains.

*Gent.* You shall have any thing.

*Lear.* No seconds? All myself?  
Why this would make a man a man of salt, 200  
To use his eyes for garden water-pots,  
Ay, and laying autumn's dust.

*Gent.* Good sir,—

*Lear.* I will die bravely as a bridegroom. What!  
I will be jovial: come, come; I am a king, 204  
My masters, know you that?

*Gent.* You are a royal one, and we obey you.

*Lear.* Then there's life in it. Nay, an you  
get it, you shall get it by running. Sa, sa, sa, sa.

*Exit. [Attendants follow.]*

*Gent.* A sight most pitiful in the meanest  
wretch, 209  
Past speaking of in a king! Thou hast one daughter,  
Who redeems nature from the general curse  
Which twain have brought her to. 212

*Edg.* Hail, gentle sir!

*Gent.* Sir, speed you: what's your will?

*Edg.* Do you hear aught, sir, of a battle toward?

*Gent.* Most sure and vulgar; every one hears that,  
Which can distinguish sound.

*Edg.* But, by your favour, 216  
How near's the other army?

*Gent.* Near, and on speedy foot; the main descry  
Stands on the hourly thought.

*Edg.* I thank you, sir: that's all.

*Gent.* Though that the queen on special cause is  
here, 220  
Her army is mov'd on. *Exit.*

*Edg.* I thank you, sir.

*Glo.* You ever-gentle gods, take my breath from  
me:

Let not my worser spirit tempt me again  
To die before you please!

*Edg.* Well pray you, father. 224

*Glo.* Now, good sir, what are you?

*Edg.* A most poor man, made tame to fortune's  
blows;

~~Who, by the art of known and feeling sorrows,  
Am pregnant to good pity. Give me your hand,  
I'll lead you to some bidding.~~

*Glo.* Hearty thanks: 229  
The bounty and the benison of heaven  
To boot, and boot!

*Enter Steward [Oswald.]*

*Osw.* A proclaim'd prize! Most happy!  
That eyeless head of thine was first fram'd flesh  
To raise my fortunes. Thou old unhappy traitor, 233  
Briefly thyself remember: the sword is out  
That must destroy thee.

*Glo.* Now let thy friendly hand  
Put strength enough to 't. [*Edgar interposes.*]

*Osw.* Wherefore, bold peasant, 236

218 main descry, etc.; cf. n.  
229 biding: abiding-place

228 pregnant: ready, receptive  
231 To boot, and boot: over and over

Dar'st thou support a publish'd traitor? Hence;  
Lest that infection of his fortune take  
Like hold on thee. Let go his arm.

*Edg.* Chill not let go, zur, without vurther  
'casion. 241

*Osw.* Let go, slave, or thou diest.

*Edg.* Good gentleman, go your gait, and let  
poor volk pass. An chud ha' bin zwaggered  
out of my life, 'twould not ha' bin zo long as  
'tis by a vortnight. Nay, come not near th' old  
man; keep out, che vor ye, or ise try whether  
your costard or my ballow be the harder. Chill  
be plain with you. 249

*Osw.* Out, dunghill!

*Edg.* Chill pick your teeth, zur. Come; no  
matter vor your foins. 252

[*They fight and Edgar knocks him down.*]

*Osw.* Slave, thou hast slain me. Villain, take my  
purse.

If ever thou wilt thrive, bury my body;  
And give the letters which thou find'st about me  
To Edmund Earl of Gloucester; seek him out  
Upon the English party: O! untimely death. 257

[*Dies.*]

*Edg.* I know thee well: a serviceable villain;  
As duteous to the vices of thy mistress  
As badness would desire.

*Glo.* What! is he dead? 260

*Edg.* Sit you down, father; rest you.

Let's see his pockets: these letters that he speaks of  
May be my friends. He's dead; I am only sorry  
He had no other deaths-man. Let us see: 264

240 chill: *I will* 244 An chud: *if I should* 247 che vor ye: *I warn you*  
248 costard: *apple, used jokingly for head* ballow: *stick*  
252 foins: *thrusts*

Leave, gentle wax; and, manners, blame us not:  
To know our enemies' minds, we'd rip their hearts;  
Their papers, is more lawful.

"Let our reciprocal vows be remembered. You  
~~have many opportunities to cut him off; if~~  
~~your will want not, time and place will be~~  
~~fruitfully offered.~~ There is nothing done if he  
return the conqueror; then am I the prisoner,  
and his bed my gaol; from the loathed warmth  
whereof deliver me, and supply the place for  
your labour.

Your wife, so I would say— 276

Affectionate servant,

GONERIL,"

O undistinguish'd space of woman's will!

A plot upon her virtuous husband's life, 280

And the exchange my brother! Here, in the sands,

Thee I'll rake up, the post unsanctified

Of murderous lechers; and in the mature time

With this ungracious paper strike the sight 284

Of the death-practis'd duke. For him 'tis well

That of thy death and business I can tell.

*Glo.* The king is mad: how stiff is my vile sense,

That I stand up, and have ingenious feeling 288

Of my huge sorrows! Better I were distract:

So should my thoughts be sever'd from my griefs,

And woes by wrong imaginations lose

The knowledge of themselves. [*Drums afar.*]-

*Edg.*

Give me your hand! 292

Far off, methinks, I hear the beaten drum.

Come, father, I'll bestow you with a friend.

*Exeunt.*

265 Leave: *give leave*

279 undistinguish'd space: *incalculable scope*

285 death-practis'd: *mortally plotted against*

277 servant: *lover*

282 rake up: *cover*


288 ingenious: *conscious*

## Scene Seven

[A Tent in the French Camp]

*Enter Cordelia, Kent, and Gentleman [Doctor.]*

*Cor.* O thou good Kent! how shall I live and work  
To match thy goodness? My life will be too short,  
And every measure fail me.

*Kent.* To be acknowledg'd, madam, is o'erpaid.   
All my reports go with the modest truth,  
Nor more nor clipp'd, but so.

*Cor.* Be better suited:  
These weeds are memories of those worsen hours:  
I prithee, put them off.

*Kent.* Pardon me, dear madam; 8  
Yet to be known shortens my made intent:  
My boon I make it that you know me not  
Till time and I think meet.

*Cor.* Then be 't so, my good lord.—[To the  
*Doctor.]* How does the king? 12

[*Doc.*] Madam, sleeps still.

*Cor.* O you kind gods,  
Cure this great breach in his abused nature!  
The untun'd and jarring senses, O! wind up 16  
Of this child-changed father!

[*Doc.*] So please your majesty  
That we may wake the king? he hath slept long.

*Cor.* Be govern'd by your knowledge, and proceed  
I' the sway of your own will. Is he array'd? 20

*Enter Lear in a chair carried by Servants.*

*Gent.* Ay, madam; in the heaviness of sleep,  
We put fresh garments on him.

6 suited: dressed 7 weeds: clothes 9 made intent: fixed purpose  
17 child-changed: change due to daughters' behavior

[Doc.] Be by, good madam, when we do awake  
him;

I doubt not of his temperance.

Cor. Very well. [Music.]

[Doc.] Please you, draw near. Louder the music  
there. 25

Cor. O my dear father! Restoration, hang  
Thy medicine on my lips, and let this kiss  
Repair those violent harms that my two sisters  
Have in thy reverence made!

Kent. Kind and dear princess! 29

Cor. Had you not been their father, these white  
flakes

Had challeng'd pity of them. Was this a face  
To be expos'd against the warring winds? 32

[To stand against the deep dread-bolted thunder?  
In the most terrible and nimble stroke

Of quick cross lightning? to watch—poor perdu!—  
With this thin helm?] Mine enemy's dog, 36

Though he had bit me, should have stood that night  
Against my fire. And wast thou fain, poor father,

To hovel thee with swine and rogues forlorn,  
In short and musty straw? Alack, alack! 40

'Tis wonder that thy life and wits at once  
Had not concluded all. He wakes; speak to him.

[Doc.] Madam, do you; 'tis fittest.

Cor. How does my royal lord? How fares your  
majesty? 44

Lear. ~~You do me wrong to take me out o' the  
grave;~~

Thou art a soul in bliss; but I am bound  
Upon a wheel of fire, that mine own tears  
Do scald like molten lead.

35 perdu: soldier placed in a forlorn hope

42 all: entirely

Cor. Sir, do you know me? 48

Lear. You are a spirit, I know; when did you die?

Cor. Still, still, far wide.

[Doc.] He's scarce awake; let him alone awhile.

Lear. Where have I been? Where am I? Fair day-light? 52

I am mightily abus'd. I should even die with pity

To see another thus. I know not what to say.

I will not swear these are my hands: let's see;

I feel this pin prick. Would I were assur'd 56

Of my condition!

Cor. O! look upon me, sir,  
And hold your hands in benediction o'er me  
No, sir, you must not kneel.

Lear. Pray, do not mock me:

I am a very foolish fond old man, 60

Fourscore and upward, not an hour more or less;

And, to deal plainly,

I fear I am not in my perfect mind.

Methinks I should know you and know this man; 64

Yet I am doubtful: for I am mainly ignorant

What place this is, and all the skill I have

Remembers not these garments; nor I know not

Where I did lodge last night. Do not laugh at me; 68

For, as I am a man, I think this lady

To be my child Cordelia.

Cor. And so I am, I am.

Lear. Be your tears wet? Yes, faith. I pray,  
weep not:

If you have poison for me, I will drink it. 72

I know you do not love me; for your sisters

Have, as I do remember, done me wrong:

You have some cause, they have not



Cor. ~~No cause, no cause.~~

Lear. Am I in France?

Kent. In your own kingdom, sir.

Lear. Do not abuse me. 77

[Doc.] Be comforted, good madam; the great rage,

You see, is kill'd in him; and yet it is danger

To make him even o'er the time he has lost. 80

Desire him to go in; trouble him no more

Till further settling.

Cor. Will 't please your highness walk?

Lear. You must bear with me.

Pray you now, forget and forgive: I am old and

foolish. *Exeunt [Lear, Cordelia, Doctor,  
and Attendants.]*

[Gent. Holds it true, sir, that the Duke of  
Cornwall was so slain?

Kent. Most certain, sir.

Gent. Who is conductor of his people? 88

Kent. As 'tis said, the bastard son of Gloucester.

Gent. They say Edgar, his banished son, is  
with the Earl of Kent in Germany.

Kent. Report is changeable. 'Tis time to  
look about; the powers of the kingdom  
approach apace. 94

Gent. The arbitrement is like to be bloody.

Fare you well, sir. [Exit.]

Kent. My point and period will be throughly  
wrought. 97

Or well or ill, as this day's battle's fought.] [Exit.]

80 even o'er, etc.: fill in the chasm in his memory

95 arbitrement: process of decision

## ACT FIFTH

## Scene One

[The British Camp near Dover]

Enter, with drum and colours, Edmund, Regan,  
Gentlemen, and Soldiers.

*Edm.* Know of the duke if his last purpose hold,  
Or whether since he is advis'd by aught  
To change the course; he 's full of alteration  
And self-reproving; bring his constant pleasure.

[To one, who goes out.]

*Reg.* Our sister's man is certainly miscarried.

*Edm.* 'Tis to be doubted, madam.

*Reg.* Now, sweet lord,  
You know the goodness I intend upon you:  
Tell me, but truly, but then speak the truth, 8  
Do you not ~~love~~ my sister?

*Edm.* In honour'd ~~love~~

*Reg.* But have you never found my brother's way  
To the forefended place?

[*Edm.* That thought abuses you.

*Reg.* I am doubtful that you have been con-  
junct 12  
And bosom'd with her, as far as we call hers.]

*Edm.* No, by mine honour, madam.

*Reg.* I never shall endure her: dear my lord,  
Be not familiar with her.

*Edm.* Fear me not. 16  
She and the duke her husband!

4 constant: *settled*  
11 forefended: *forbidden*

6 doubted: *feared*  
13 as far, etc.; *cf. n.*

*Enter with drum and colours, Albany,  
Goneril, Soldiers.*

[*Gon.* [*Aside.*] I had rather lose the battle than  
that sister

Should loosen him and me.]

*Alb.* Our very loving sister, well be-met. 20  
Sir, this I heard, the king is come to his daughter,  
With others; whom the rigour of our state  
Forc'd to cry out. [Where I could not be honest  
I never yet was valiant: for this business, 24  
It toucheth us, as France invades our land,  
Not holds the king, with others, whom, I fear,  
Most just and heavy causes make oppose.

*Edm.* Sir, you speak nobly.]

*Reg.* Why is this reason'd? 28

*Gon.* Combine together 'gainst the enemy;  
For these domestic and particular broils  
Are not the question here.

*Alb.* Let's then determine 32  
With the ancient of war on our proceeding.

*Edm.* I shall attend you presently at your tent.

*Reg.* Sister, you'll go with us?

*Gon.* No.

*Reg.* 'Tis most convenient; pray you, go with us. 36

*Gon.* [*Aside.*] O, ho! I know the riddle. [*Aloud.*]

I will go. *Exeunt both the Armies.*

*Enter Edgar.*

*Edg.* If e'er your Grace had speech with man so  
poor,  
Hear me one word.

26 bolds; *cf. n.*

32 ancient; *cf. n.*

37 riddle: *the answer to the riddle*

34 us: *me*

28 reason'd: *discussed*

36 convenient: *proper*

*Alb.* I'll overtake you. Speak.

[*Exeunt Edmund, Regan, Goneril.*]

*Edg.* Before you fight the battle, ope this letter. 40  
If you have victory, let the trumpet sound  
For him that brought it: wretched though I seem,  
I can produce a champion that will prove  
What is avouched there. If you miscarry, 44  
Your business of the world hath so an end,  
And machination ceases. Fortune love you!

*Alb.* Stay till I have read the letter.

*Edg.* I was forbid it.  
When time shall serve, let but the herald cry, 48  
And I'll appear again. *Exit.*

*Alb.* Why, fare thee well: I will o'erlook thy paper.

*Enter Edmund.*

*Edm.* The enemy's in view; draw up your powers.  
Here is the guess of their true strength and forces 52  
By diligent discovery; but your haste  
Is now urg'd on you.

*Alb.* We will greet the time. *Exit*

*Edm.* To both these sisters have I sworn my love; 56  
Each jealous of the other, as the stung  
Are of the adder. Which of them shall I take?  
Both? one? or neither? Neither can be enjoy'd  
If both remain alive: to take the widow  
Exasperates, makes mad her sister Goneril; 60  
And hardly shall I carry out my side,  
Her husband being alive. Now then, we'll use  
His countenance for the battle; which being done  
Let her who would be rid of him devise 64  
His speedy taking off. As for the mercy

44 avouched: asserted  
54 time: occasion

53 discovery: reconnoitring  
56 jealous: suspicious

Which he intends to Lear, and to Cordelia,  
 The battle done, and they within our power,  
 Shall never see his pardon; for my state 68  
Stands on me to defend, not to debate. *Exit.*

## Scene Two

[*A Field between the two Camps*]

*Alarum within. Enter, with drum and colours, Lear, Cordelia, and Soldiers, over the stage, and exeunt. Enter Edgar and Gloucester.*

*Edg.* Here, father, take the shadow of this tree  
 For your good host; pray that the right may thrive.  
 If ever I return to you again,  
 I'll bring you comfort.

*Glo.* Grace go with you, sir! 4  
 [*Exit Edgar.*]

*Alarum and Retreat Within. Enter Edgar.*

*Edg.* Away, old man! give me thy hand: away!  
 King Lear hath lost, he and his daughter ta'en.  
 Give me thy hand; come on.

*Glo.* No further, sir; a man may rot even here. 8

*Edg.* What! in ill thoughts again? Men must  
 endure  
 Their going hence, even as their coming hither:  
Ripeness is all. Come on.

*Glo.* And that's true too. *Exeunt.*

68 Shall: *they shall*11 Ripeness: *readiness*

## Scene Three

[The British Camp, near Dover]

*Enter, in conquest, with drum and colours, Edmund;  
Lear and Cordelia as prisoners, Soldiers, Cap-  
tain.*

*Edm.* Some officers take them away: good guard,  
Until their greater pleasures first be known  
That are to censure them.

*Cor.* We are not the first  
Who, with best meaning, have incur'd the worst. 4  
For thee, oppressed king, am I cast down;  
Myself could else out-frown false Fortune's frown.  
Shall we not see these daughters and these sisters?

*Lear.* No, no, no, no! Come, let's away to  
prison; 8

We two alone will sing like birds i' the cage:  
When thou dost ask me blessing, I'll kneel down,  
And ask of thee forgiveness: so we'll live,  
And pray, and sing, and tell old tales, and laugh 12  
At gilded butterflies, and hear poor rogues  
Talk of court news; and we'll talk with them too,  
Who loses and who wins; who's in, who's out;  
And take upon 's the mystery of things, 16  
As if we were God's spies: and we'll wear out,  
In a wall'd prison, packs and sets of great ones  
That ebb and flow by the moon.

*Edm.* Take them away.

*Lear.* Upon such sacrifices, my Cordelia, 20  
The gods themselves throw incense. Have I caught  
thee?

He that parts us shall bring a brand from heaven,

1 good guard: guard them well

And fire us hence like foxes. Wipe thine eyes;  
 The good years shall devour them, flesh and fell, 24  
 Ere they shall make us weep: we'll see 'em starve  
 first;

Come. [*Exeunt Lear and Cordelia, guarded.*]

*Edm.* Come hither, captain; hark,  
 Take thou this note; [*Giving a paper.*] go follow them  
 to prison: 28

One step I have advanc'd thee; if thou dost  
 As this instructs thee, thou dost make thy way  
 To noble fortunes; ~~know thou this, that men~~  
Are as the time is; to be tender-minded 32  
 Does not become a sword; thy great employment  
 Will not bear question; either say thou'lt do 't,  
 Or thrive by other means.

*Capt.* I'll do 't, my lord.

*Edm.* About it; and write happy when thou hast  
 done. 36

Mark,—I say, instantly, and carry it so  
 As I have set it down.

*[Capt. I cannot draw a cart nor eat dried oats;  
 If it be man's work I will do it.]* *Exit Captain.*

*Flourish. Enter Albany, Goneril, Regan, Soldiers.*

*Alb.* Sir, you have show'd to-day your valiant  
 strain, 41

And fortune led you well; you have the captives  
 Who were the opposites of this day's strife;  
 We do require them of you, so to use them 44  
 As we shall find their merits and our safety  
 May equally determine.

*Edm.* Sir, I thought it fit  
 To send the old and miserable king

To some retention, and appointed guard; 48  
 Whose age has charms in it, whose title more,  
 To pluck the common bosom on his side,  
 And turn our impress'd lances in our eyes  
 Which do command them. With him I sent the  
 queen; 52

My reason all the same; and they are ready  
 To-morrow, or at further space, to appear  
 Where you shall hold your session. [At this time  
 We sweat and bleed; the friend hath lost his  
 friend, 56

And the best quarrels, in the heat, are curs'd  
 By those that feel their sharpness;  
The question of Cordelia and her father  
Requires a fitter place.]

*Alb.* Sir, by your patience, 60  
I hold you but a subject of this war,  
Not as a brother.

*Reg.* That's as we list to grace him:  
 Methinks our pleasure might have been demanded,  
 Ere you had spoke so far. He led our powers, 64  
 Bore the commission of my place and person;  
 The which immediacy may well stand up,  
 And call itself your brother.

*Gon.* Not so hot;  
In his own grace he doth exalt himself 68  
 More than in your addition.

*Reg.* In my rights,  
 By me invested, he compeers the best.

*Gon.* That were the most, if he should husband you.

*Reg.* Jesters do oft prove prophets.

48 retention: *detention*  
 63 demanded: *requested*  
 66 immediacy: *sovereignty*

51 impress'd: *enlisted*

70 compeers: *equals*



Gon. Holla, holla! 72  
That eye that told you so look'd but a-squint.

Reg. Lady, I am not well; else I should answer  
From a full-flowing stomach. General,  
Take thou my soldiers, prisoners, patrimony; 76  
Dispose of them, of me; the walls are thine;  
Witness the world, that I create thee here  
My lord and master.

Gon. Mean you to enjoy him?

Alb. The let-alone lies not in your good will. 80

Edm. Nor in thine, lord.

Alb. Half-blooded fellow, yes.

Reg. [*To Edmund.*] Let the drum strike, and  
prove my title thine.

Alb. Stay yet; hear reason. Edmund, I arrest thee  
On capital treason; and, in thy arrest, 84  
This gilded serpent. [*Pointing to Goneril.*] For your  
claim, fair sister,

I bar it in the interest of my wife;  
'Tis she is sub-contracted to this lord,  
And I, her husband, contradict your bans. 88  
If you will marry, make your love to me,  
My lady is bespoken.

Gon. An interlude!

Alb. Thou art arm'd, Gloucester; let the trumpet  
sound:

If none appear to prove upon thy person 92  
Thy heinous, manifest, and many treasons,  
There is my pledge; [*Throws down a glove.*] I'll  
prove it on thy heart,  
Ere I taste bread, thou art in nothing less  
Than I have here proclaim'd thee.

75 stomach: *passion*

77 walls: *figuratively, including all my possessions*

80 let-alone: *power to permit or hinder*

90 interlude: *farce*

*Reg.* Sick! O sick! 96

*Gon.* [*Aside.*] If not, I'll ne'er trust medicine.

*Edm.* There's my exchange: [*Throws down a glove.*] what in the world he is

That names me traitor, villain-like he lies.

Call by thy trumpet: he that dares approach,

On him, on you, who not? I will maintain 101

My truth and honour firmly.

*Alb.* A herald, ho!

*Edm.* A herald, ho! a herald!

*Alb.* Trust to thy single virtue; for thy soldiers, 104

All levied in my name, have in my name

Took their discharge.

*Reg.* My sickness grows upon me.

*Alb.* She is not well; convey her to my tent.

[*Exit Regan, led.*]

Come hither, herald,

*Enter a Herald.*

Let the trumpet sound,— 108

And read out this.

*Capt.* Sound, trumpet! *A trumpet sounds.*

*Herald reads.*

"If any man of quality or degree within the lists of the army will maintain upon Edmund, supposed Earl of Gloucester, ~~that he~~ is a manifold traitor, let him ~~appear at the~~ third sound of the trumpet. He is bold in his defence."

116

*Edm.* Sound!

*1 Trumpet.*

*Her.* Again!

*2 Trumpet.*

*Her.* Again!

*3 Trumpet.*

*Trumpet answers within.*

*Enter Edgar, armed.*

*Alb.* Ask him his purposes, why he appears  
Upon this call o' the trumpet.

*Her.* What are you? 121  
Your name? your quality? and why you answer  
This present summons?

*Edg.* Know, my name is lost,  
By treason's tooth bare-gnawn and canker-bit:  
Yet am I noble as the adversary 125  
I come to cope.

*Alb.* Which is that adversary?

*Edg.* What's he that speaks for ~~Edmund Earl of~~  
Gloucester?

*Edm.* Himself: what sayst thou to him?

*Edg.* Draw thy sword, 128  
That, if my speech offend a noble heart,  
Thy arm may do thee justice; here is mine:  
Behold, it is the privilege of mine honours,  
My oath, and my profession: I protest, 132  
Maugre thy strength, youth, place, and eminence,  
Despite thy victor sword and fire-new fortune,  
Thy valour and thy heart, thou art a traitor,  
False to thy gods, thy brother, and thy father,  
Conspirant 'gainst this high illustrious prince,  
And, from the extremest upward of thy head  
To the descent and dust below thy foot,  
A most toad-spotted traitor. Say thou 'No,' 140  
This sword, this arm, and my best spirits are bent  
To prove upon thy heart, whereto I speak,  
Thou liest.

*Edm.* In wisdom I should ask thy name;

124 canker-bit: *worm-eaten*  
133 Maugre: *despite*

126 cope: *meet*  
139 descent and dust: *lowest dust*

But since thy outside looks so fair and war-like,  
And that thy tongue some say of breeding  
breathes, 145

What safe and nicely I might well delay  
By rule of knighthood, I disdain and spurn;  
Back do I toss these treasons to thy head, 148  
With the hell-hated lie o'erwhelm thy heart,  
Which, for they yet glance by and scarcely bruise,  
This sword of mine shall give them instant way,  
Where they shall rest for ever. Trumpets, speak! 152

*Alarums. Fights. [Edmund falls.]*

*Alb.* Save him, save him!

*Gon.* This is practice, Gloucester:  
By the law of arms thou ~~wast not bound to answer~~  
~~An unknown opposite~~; thou art not vanquish'd,  
But cozen'd and beguil'd.

*Alb.* Shut your mouth, dame, 156  
Or with this paper shall I stop it. Hold, sir;  
Thou worse than any name, read thine own evil:  
No tearing, lady; I perceive you know it.

*[Gives the letter to Edmund.]*

*Gon.* ~~Say, if I do, the laws are mine, not thine.~~ 160  
~~Who can arraign me for 't?~~ *Exit.*

*Alb.* Most monstrous!  
Know'st thou this paper?

*Edm.* Ask me not what I know.

*Alb.* Go after her: she's desperate; govern her.

*[Exit an Officer.]*

*Edm.* ~~What you have charg'd me with, that have~~  
I done, 164

~~And more, much more; the time will bring it out:~~  
~~'Tis past, and so am I.~~ But what art thou

That hast this fortune on me? If thou'rt noble,  
I do forgive thee.

*Edg.* ~~Let's exchange charity.~~ 168

I am no less in blood than thou art, Edmund;  
If more, the more thou hast wrong'd me.  
My name is Edgar, and thy father's son.

~~The gods are just, and of our pleasant vices~~ 172

Make instruments to plague us:

~~The dark and vicious place where thee he got  
Cost him his eyes.~~

*Edm.* Thou hast spoken right, 'tis true;  
~~The wheel is come full circle: I am here.~~ 176

*Alb.* Methought thy very gait did prophesy

A royal nobleness: I must embrace thee:

Let sorrow split my heart, if ever I

Did hate thee or thy father.

*Edg.* Worthy prince, I know 't. 180

*Alb.* Where have you hid yourself?

How have you known the miseries of your father?

*Edg.* By nursing them, my lord. ~~List a brief tale;~~  
And, when 'tis told, O! that my heart ~~would burst!~~ 184

The bloody proclamation to escape

That follow'd me so near,—O! our lives' sweetness,

That we the pain of death ~~would hourly die~~

Rather than die at once!—taught me to shift 188

Into a madman's rags, to assume a semblance

That very dogs disdain'd: and in this habit

Met I my father with his bleeding rings,

Their precious stones new lost; became his guide, 192

Led him, begg'd for him, sav'd him from despair;

Never,—O fault!—reveal'd myself unto him,

Until some half hour past, when I was arm'd;

Not sure, though hoping, of this good success,

*King Lear, V. iii*

I ask'd his blessing, and from first to last  
Told him my pilgrimage: but his flaw'd heart,—  
Alack! too weak the conflict to support;  
'Twixt two extremes of passion, joy and grief,  
Burst smilingly.

*Edm.* This speech of yours hath mov'd me,  
And shall perchance do good; but speak you on: 202  
You look as you had something more to say.

*Alb.* If there be more, more woeful, hold it in;  
For I am almost ready to dissolve, 205  
Hearing of this.

[*Edg.* This would have seem'd a period  
To such as love not sorrow; but another,  
To amplify too much, would make much more,  
And top extremity. 209

Whilst I was big in clamour came there a man,  
Who, having seen me in my worst estate,  
Shunn'd my abhorr'd society; but then, finding  
Who 'twas that so endur'd, with his strong arms  
He fasten'd on my neck, and bellow'd out  
As he'd burst heaven; threw him on my father;  
Told the most piteous tale of Lear and him 216  
That ever ear receiv'd; which in recounting  
His grief grew puissant, and the strings of life  
Began to crack: twice then the trumpet sounded,  
And there I left him tranc'd.

*Alb.* But who was this? 220

*Edg.* Kent, sir, the banish'd Kent; who in disguise  
Follow'd his enemy king, and did him service  
Improper for a slave.]

*Enter a Gentleman [with a bloody knife.]*

*Gent.* Help, help! O help!

209 top extremity: exceed the limit of endurance

*Edg.* What kind of help?

*Alb.* Speak, man. 224

*Edg.* What means that bloody knife?

*Gent.* 'Tis hot, it smokes;

It came even from the heart of—O! she's dead.

*Alb.* Who dead? speak, man.

*Gent.* Your lady, sir, your lady: and her sister 228

By her is poison'd; she confesses it.

*Edm.* I was contracted to them both: all three  
Now marry in an instant.

*Edg.* Here comes Kent.

*Enter Kent.*

*Alb.* Produce the bodies, be they alive or dead: 232

~~This judgment of the heavens, that makes us tremble,  
Touches us not with pity.~~

O! is this he?

The time will not allow the compliment

Which very manners urges.

*Kent.* I am come 236

To bid my king and master aye good-night;

Is he not here?

*Alb.* Great thing of us forgot!

Speak, Edmund, where's the king? and where's Cor-  
delia?

Seest thou this object, Kent? 240

*Goneril and Regan's bodies brought out.*

*Kent.* Alack! why thus?

*Edm.* Yet Edmund was below'd:

The one the other poison'd for my sake,

And after slew herself.

*Alb.* Even so. Cover their faces. 244

~~*Edm.* I pant for life; some good I mean to do  
Despite of mine own nature. Quickly send,~~

Be brief in it, to the castle; for my writ  
Is on the life of Lear and on Cordelia. 248  
Nay, send in time.

*Alb.* Run, run! O run!

*Edg.* To whom, my lord? Who has the office? send  
Thy token of reprieve.

*Edm.* Well thought on: take my sword, 252  
Give it the captain.

*Alb.* Haste thee, for thy life.

[Exit Edgar.]

~~*Edm.* He hath commission from thy wife and me  
To hang Cordelia in the prison, and  
To lay the blame upon her own despair, 256  
That she fordid herself.~~

*Alb.* The gods defend her! Bear him hence awhile.  
[Edmund is borne off.]

*Enter Lear, with Cordelia in his arms; [Edgar,  
Captain, and Others.]*

*Lear.* Howl, howl, howl, howl! O! you are men  
of stones:

Had I your tongues and eyes, I'd use them so  
That heaven's vault should crack. She's gone for  
ever. 261

I know when one is dead, and when one lives;  
She's dead as earth. Lend me a looking-glass;  
If that her breath will mist or stain the stone,  
Why, then she lives.

*Kent.* Is this the promis'd end? 265

*Edg.* Or image of that horror?

*Alb.* Fall and cease?

*Lear.* This feather stirs; she lives! if it be so,



It is a chance which does redeem all sorrows 268  
That ever I have felt.

*Kent.* O, my good master!

*Lear.* Prithee, away.

*Edg.* 'Tis noble Kent, your friend.

*Lear.* A plague upon you, murderers, traitors all!  
I might have sav'd her; now, she's gone for ever!  
Cordelia, Cordelia! stay a little. Ha! 273

What is 't thou sayst? Her voice was ever soft,  
Gentle and low, an excellent thing in woman.

~~I kill'd the slave that was a hanging thee,~~ 276

*Capt.* 'Tis true, my lord, he did.

*Lear.* Did I not, fellow?

I have seen the day, with my good biting falchion  
I would have made them skip: I am old now,  
And these same crosses spoil me. Who are you?  
Mine eyes are not o' the best: I'll tell you  
straight. 281

~~*Kent.* If fortune brag of two she lov'd and hated,  
One of them we behold.~~

~~*Lear.* This is a dull sight. Are you not Kent?~~

*Kent.* The same, 284

Your servant Kent. Where is your servant Caius?

*Lear.* He's a good fellow, I can tell you that;  
He'll strike, and quickly too. He's dead and rotten.

~~*Kent.* No, my good lord; I am the very man—~~ 288

*Lear.* I'll see that straight.

*Kent.* That, from your first of difference and  
decay,

Have follow'd your sad steps.

*Lear.* You are welcome hither.

280 crosses: *perversities, troubles*

284 sight: *referring to his power of vision*

290 first of difference: *first perversity*

*Kent.* Nor no man else; all's cheerless, dark, and  
deadly: 292

Your eldest daughters have fordone themselves,  
And desperately are dead.

*Lear.* Ay, so I think.

*Alb.* He knows not what he says, and vain it is  
That we present us to him.

*Edg.* Very bootless. 296

*Enter a Messenger.*

*Mess.* Edmund is dead, my lord.

*Alb.* That's but a trifle here.

You lords and noble friends, know our intent;  
What comfort to this great decay may come  
Shall be applied: for us, we will resign, 300  
During the life of this old majesty,  
To him our absolute power:—[*To Edgar and Kent.*]

You, to your rights;  
With boot and such addition as your honours  
Have more than merited. All friends shall taste  
The wages of their virtue, and all foes 305  
The cup of their deservings. O! see, see!

*Lear.* And my poor fool is hang'd! No, no, no  
life!

Why should a dog, a horse, a rat, have life, 308  
And thou no breath at all? Thou'lt come no more,  
Never, never, never, never, never!

Pray you, undo this button: thank you, sir.

Do you see this? Look on her, look, her lips, 312  
Look there, look there! *He dies.*

*Edg.* He faints!—my lord, my lord!

*Kent.* Break, heart; I prithee, break, his own or

*Edg.* Look up, my lord. *lears?*

307 fool: referring, with intimate tenderness, to Cordelia

*Kent.* Vex not his ghost: O! let him pass; he hates  
him

That would upon the rack of this tough world  
Stretch him out longer.

*Edg.* He is gone, indeed. 317

*Kent.* ~~The wonder is he hath endur'd so long:~~  
He but usurp'd his life.

*Alb.* Bear them from hence. Our present busi-  
ness 320

Is general woe. [*To Kent and Edgar.*] ~~Friends of my  
soul, you twain—~~

~~Rule in this realm, and the gor'd state sustain.~~

*Kent.* ~~I have a journey, sir, shortly to go;~~  
My master calls me, I must not say no. 324

*Alb.* The weight of this sad time we must obey;  
Speak what we feel, not what we ought to say.  
The oldest hath borne most: we that are young,  
Shall never see so much, nor live so long. 328

*Exeunt, with a dead march.*

319 usurp'd: retained by violence

FINIS

## NOTES

I. i. 55. *Where nature doth with merit challenge.* 'Where inherent goodness vies with moral growth,' i.e., virtue developed by training. If, on the other hand, *challenge* means *demand*, then *with merit* would be an adverbial phrase qualifying *challenge*, and the whole expression would mean 'Where inherent goodness deservedly demands our largest bounty.' I prefer the former interpretation.

I. i. 76. *precious square of sense.* 'The most sensitive test by which I can appreciate joy.'

I. i. 151. *Reserve thy state.* 'Reserve everything, rank, dignity, plenary power.'

I. i. 190. *old course.* Although old, Kent will begin life again in a new country. Or perhaps *shape his old course* means 'be his old self.'

I. i. 271. *wash'd eyes.* I do not think Cordelia is weeping. She means her eyes are clear, and see the truth about her sisters.

I. i. 282. *want.* 'You well deserve the lack of affection that you have lacked yourself.'

I. ii. 109. *wind me into him.* Get into his confidence.

I. ii. 145. *dragon's tail.* Referring to the position of the moon with relation to the constellation Draco.

I. ii. 153. *Fa, sol, la, mi.* This is mere trolling nonsense, based on the notes of the musical scale.

I. iii. 21. *With checks as flatteries, when they are seen abus'd.* *Abus'd* means *deceived*, and *they* refers to old men.

I. iv. 18. *To eat no fish.* This probably refers to the Protestants, who, in order to show their hatred for the Catholics and their support of the English Government, made a parade of eating no fish at all. See Marston's play, *The Dutch Courtesan*, I. ii. 'I

trust I am none of the wicked that eat fish a Fridayes.' There was a proverb, 'He's an honest man, and eats no fish.'

I. iv. 95. *football*. Football was a rough game for rough lads, not regarded as a gentleman's sport.

I. iv. 127. *A pestilent gall to me!* Probably refers, not to Oswald, as most commentators think, but to the Fool, who is continually reminding Lear of his folly.

I. iv. 136. *Learn more than thou trowest*. *Trowest* may mean *believest* in the sense of *accept*; but it probably means *knowest*. The precept is, 'never be satisfied with the present state of your knowledge, but strive ever to learn more than you already know.'

I. iv. 168. *if I had a monopoly out*. This alludes to a common commercial abuse in Shakespeare's time. Individuals or companies were granted the exclusive right to trade in various commodities (as wine, sugar, etc.), and often thus amassed huge fortunes.

I. iv. 247. *Whoop, Jug!* Probably mere nonsense, though many ingenious explanations have been suggested.

II. ii. 9. *Lipsbury pinfold*. Unknown reference, perhaps Finsbury; a pinfold is a cattle-pound.

II. ii. 16. *three-suited*. This is often taken to indicate poverty of wardrobe, but cf. III. iv. 189, *who hath had three suits to his back*, where Edgar plainly alludes to a former state of affluence. It may refer to a servant's liveries, and thus would be a natural term of contempt applied to Oswald; and Edgar, in the later passage, would refer to the 'enough and to spare' enjoyed by hired servants. At the extortionate price of Elizabethan clothes the possession of three suits was quite beyond the ordinary man. Similarly *hundred-pound* and *worsted-stocking* suggest luxury. Kent is contrasting the pampered lackey's outward exquisiteness with his mental and moral poverty.

II. ii. 68. *zed*. Z was regarded as a superfluous

letter, its necessary work being done by *S*. Remember that *Z* is pronounced *Zed* in England today.

II. ii. 79, 80. *holy cords*, etc. The *holy cords* are the bonds of affection between father and daughters: *intrinse* means either *tightly drawn* or *intricate*.

II. ii. 83. *halcyon*. The kingfisher: the popular superstition was that if a dead kingfisher were hung up, his bill would point toward the quarter from which the wind was blowing.

II. ii. 89. *Camelot*. Supposed to have been in Somerset, but the Elizabethans identified it with Winchester and believed that King Arthur's round table was still to be seen there (see the play of *Eastward Hoe*, composed about a year before *King Lear*.) Winchester is about a day's journey by foot from Sarum (Salisbury) Plain. It is possible that Kent's words, *Goose . . . cackling . . . Camelot*, imply an allusion to an unsavory disease known to Shakespeare as 'Winchester goose.'

II. ii. 132. *Ajax*. Possibly it means that Ajax, the Greek warrior, could not begin to brag with Oswald. But has Oswald bragged? Ajax was pronounced *A-jakes*, and there may have been a vulgar pun, which would account for Cornwall's rage. Just such a pun occurs in *Love's Labour's Lost*, V. ii. 578. Or, it may be that Kent meant that Oswald was making a fool out of Cornwall, as cheap rascals could out of the powerful and unsuspecting Ajax.

II. ii. 146. *away*. This has the sense of *hither* in the boys' street game, often played in New England, 1870-1890, 'Come away!' In 1898, in Michigan, I heard a hostess call from the dining-room, 'Come away! supper is ready.'

II. ii. 169. *sun*. An old proverb. Malone cites Howell's *Collection of English Proverbs* in his *Dictionary*, 1660: 'He goes out of God's blessing to the warm sun,' viz., from good to worse. It occurs also in Lyly's novel, *Euphues* (1579).

II. ii. 172. *miracles*, etc. The *miracle* is the letter from Cordelia, which he reads aloud, picking out the words in the uncertain light: *enormous state* means *prodigious state of affairs*.

II. iii. 14. *Bedlam*. These beggars, called 'Tom o' Bedlam,' pretended to have been confined in Bedlam (Bethlehem Hospital for lunatics); they called themselves 'Poor Tom.'

II. iii. 20. *Turlygood*. Possibly a corruption of *thoroughly good*; but no one knows.

II. iv. 271. *gorgeous*. What Lear means is, that if clothes were worn merely for warmth, then Regan is absurd; for her clothes are evidently chosen for appearance rather than for comfort. Possibly the line (meaningless as it literally stands), *if only to go warm were gorgeous*, has the following significance: 'if you are going to condemn a beggar for loving finery when really his clothing is only sufficient for warmth, why, then, how much more worthy of condemnation is Regan.'

III. ii. 84. *No heretics burned, but wenches' suitors*. This refers either to syphilis, or the treatment for it.

III. ii. 95. *Merlin*. A playful anachronism. King Lear's reign was supposed to have happened long before the time of Christ. Merlin was the magician of King Arthur's court. Thus the Fool would have lived about 1800 years before Merlin.

III. iv. 49. *Who gives*, etc. Theobald was the first to show that the allusions to superstitions and fiends in Edgar's simulated ravings were largely taken from Harsnet's *Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures*, 1603.

III. iv. 74. *pelican*. The pelican's offspring were believed to smite their parents. —

III. iv. 144. *Smulkin . . . Modo . . . Mahu*. From Harsnet.

III. iv. 185. *Child Rowland*, etc. *Child* means *Knight* or *Lord*, cf. *Child Harold*. This is probably the fragment of an old ballad, now lost. The first line inspired Browning's great poem, *Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came*, published in 1855.

III. vi. 8. *Frateretto . . . Nero*. From Harsnet. The allusion to Nero may be mere nonsense. Rabelais said Nero was a fiddler in hell, and Trajan an angler.

III. vi. 28. *Come o'er the bourn, Bessy, to me*. *Bourn* here means *brook*, a burn. An old song, addressed to Queen Elizabeth on her coronation day.

III. vi. 55. *joint-stool*. A joint-stool was one made by joiners, as opposed to the usual rough home-made ones. The frequent mention of this article illustrates the lack of good furniture in Shakespeare's time.

III. vi. 92. *noon*. Much sentimental nonsense has been gushed about this, some commentators believing the Fool meant he would die in the noontide of his life. Manifestly the Fool is simply playing up to Lear's remark, 'We'll go to supper in the morning.'

III. vii. 65. *All cruels else subscrib'd*. A puzzling phrase. Possibly it means that the Porter would subscribe, i.e., give up everything cruel in wolves or other wild beasts, and remember only that they needed shelter on such a night. This is Furness's conjecture.

IV. i. 11. *strange mutations*, etc. If *hate* can be taken in the sense of *despise*, then the passage might mean 'the strange reverses in fortune make us despise life altogether, and thus stoically await old age and natural death. Otherwise, we should kill ourselves; no one would grow old.' Perhaps Moberly is right, who paraphrases 'we so hate life that we gladly find ourselves lapsing into old age and approaching death, which will deliver us from it.'

IV. i. 20. *Our means secure us*. 'Advantages make us careless.'



IV. i. 72. *Dover*. If the heath where Lear wandered in the storm and the one given in the common stage direction at the head of this scene are both identified with Egdon Heath in Dorset, as seems generally to be supposed, Gloucester has a long walk ahead of him to Dover.

IV. ii. 29. *I have been worth the whistle*. Alluding to the proverb, 'It is a poor dog that is not worth the whistling'; that is, there was a time when I was worthy of notice.

IV. ii. 54. *Fools do those villains pity*. *Villains* probably refers to Lear, though many think it means Gloucester, while Furness ingeniously suggests it means Albany himself.

IV. vi. 40. *My snuff*, etc. The useless part of me alone is left, and is only a hindrance. The wick is encumbered with the snuff.

IV. vi. 74. *the clearest gods*. Perhaps the adjective is used in the sense of the Latin *clarissimi*, the most illustrious. However, Stewart (see next note) explains the phrase as meaning the gods that perform miracles.

IV. vi. 89. '*clothier's yard*.' Charles D. Stewart, in his book, *Some Textual Difficulties in Shakespeare*, Yale University Press, 1914, says, p. 86: 'A "clothier's yard" does not refer to a particular sort of yard as a standard of measurement; it is the distance from the tip of the nose to the end of the thumb when the arm is stretched out sidewise. A bowman who could draw a clothier's yard was one who, when the butt of the shaft was at his nose, had the strength to force the bow out the full length of the arm. . . . An archer of size and strength had to have an arrow of such length that he could use it in this way; and . . . "an arrow of a cloth-yard long" . . . refers to this ability, and not to a standard of measurement.'

IV. vi. 101. '*ay*' and '*no*.' Stewart was the first to give a satisfactory explanation of this passage.

On p. 84 of book quoted above, he says: 'There had just resounded, in slow impressive tones, on Lear's irresponsible brain, the words "I—know—that voice."' As to *divinity*, Stewart says, 'A man who will say ay or no to anything whatever, according as his interest lies, is simply a liar; [Stewart's pun is probably unintentional] and lying is no good divinity.'

IV. vi. 158. *handy-dandy*. An expression from a child's game meaning 'which hand will you have?'—i.e., they both look alike.

IV. vi. 218. *main descry*, etc. 'Every hour we expect to get a distant view of the main body of the other army.'

V. i. 13. *as far as we call hers*. These six words, which are not in the Folios, seem puzzling to me, though Furness passes them without comment. Possibly they mean 'to the limit of what she has to give,' possessing everything she is and has.

V. i. 26. *Not bolds the king*, etc. A confused phrase at best. Either *It* or *France* is the subject of *bolds*. Albany apparently means 'This business concerns me because France invades England, not because France comforts King Lear along with others, whom, I fear, righteous and serious causes impel against us.'

V. i. 32. *ancient of war*. Ordinarily *ancient* means *ensign*. Either Albany had in mind some especially well-informed ensign, or *ancient of war* means *veteran officers*.

V. iii. 24. *good years*. An expression of disputed origin, used as a term of disgust. Some editors take it to be derived from the name of a disease, and spell *goujeres*. Definite authority for this is lacking.

V. iii. 176. *The wheel is come full circle*. Fortune's wheel. Edmund began at the bottom, reached the top (Earl of Gloucester) and is now again at the bottom.

## APPENDIX A

### SOURCES OF 'KING LEAR'

There are two tragic stories in this play; the sorrows of Lear and the subordinate tragedy of Gloucester. The former is one of the oldest and most familiar tales in English literature, given in its general outlines by many of the old romancers. Holinshed, in his *Chronicles* (Chapters V. and VI. of the *Second Book of the History of England, 1577*), has nearly all the main facts. He gives the names of the King, the three daughters, and their husbands; the answers of the three, saying how much they loved Lear, with Cordelia's consequent disgrace; the cruelty of the two dukes and duchesses to the King. But in his version, France defeats the two antagonists, restores Lear to the throne, and after his death, Cordelia becomes Queen. There was also an old play, entered in the Stationers' Register, 14 May, 1594, *The moste famous Chronicle history of Leire kinge of England and his Three Daughters*. On 8 May, 1605, possibly as a result of the popularity of Shakespeare's play, although this is doubtful, there was entered on the Register the *Tragecall historie of kinge Leir and his Three Daughters*. Furness thinks the direct source was in this play rather than in Holinshed, and he mentions a number of minor similarities that certainly help to establish his point.

The Gloucester story was probably taken from Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*, 1590. In the second book, there is a narrative called *The pitifull state, and story of the Paphlagonian vnkinde king, and his kinde sonne, first related by the son, then by the blind*

*father.* This tale gives many of the circumstances found in Shakespeare's play.

The following extract from Holinshed will show how clearly the facts in the main story appear:

'Whervpon he first asked Gonorrilla the eldest, how well shee loued him: who calling hir gods to record, protested, that she loued him more than hir owne life, which by right and reason shoulde be most deere vnto hir. With which answer the father being well pleased, turned to the second, and demanded of hir how well she loued him: who answered (confirming hir saings with great othes) that she loued him more than tounge could expresse, and farre aboue all other creatures of the world.

'Then called he his yoongest daughter Cordeilla before him, and asked of hir what account she made of him: vnto whome she made this answer as followeth: Knowing the great loue and fatherlie zeale that you haue always borne towards me, (for the which I maie not answere you otherwise than I thinke, and as my conscience leadeth me) I protest vnto you, that I haue loued you euer, and will continuallie (while I liue) loue you as my naturall father. And if you would more vnderstand of the loue that I beare you, assertaine your selfe, that so much as you haue, so much you are worth, and so much I loue you, and no more. The father being nothing content with this answer, married his two eldest daughters, the one vnto Henninus, the Duke of Cornewal, and the other vnto Maglanus, the Duke of Albania, betwixt whome he willed and ordeined that his land should be deuided after his death, and the one halfe thereof immediatelie should be assigned to them in hand: but for the third daughter Cordeilla he reserued nothing.

'Neuertheles it fortunod that one of the princes of Gallia (which now is called France) whose name was Aganippus, hearing of the beautie, womanhood,

and good conditions of the said Cordeilla, desired to haue hir in mariage, and sent ouer to hir father, requiring that he mighte haue hir to wife: to whome answere was made, that he might haue his daughter, but as for anie dower he could haue none, for all was promised and assured to hir other sisters alreadie. Aganippus notwithstanding this answer of deniall to receiue anie thing by way of dower with Cordeilla, tooke hir to wife, onlie moued thereto (I saie) for respect of hir person and amiable vertues. This Aganippus was one of the twelue kings that ruled Gallia in those daies, as in the Brittish historie it is recorded. But to proceed.

'After that Leir was fallen into age, the two dukes that had married his two eldest daughters, thinking it long yer the gouernment of the land did come to their hands, arose against him in armour, and reft from him the gouernance of the land, vpon conditions to be continued for terme of life: by the which he was put to his portion, that is, to liue after a rate assigned to him for the maintenance of his estate, which in processe of time was diminished as well by Maglanus as by Henninus. But the greatest grieffe that Leir tooke, was to see the vnkindnesse of his daughters, which seemed to thinke that all was too much which their father had, the same being neuer so little: in so much, that going from the one to the other, he was brought to that miserie, that scarslie they would allow him one seruant to waite vpon him.

'In the end, such was the vnkindnesse, or (as I maie saie) the vnnaturalnesse which he found in his two daughters, notwithstanding their faire and pleasant words vttered in time past, that being constrained of necessitie, he fled the land, and sailed into Gallia, there to seeke some comfort of his youngest daughter Cordeilla whom before time he hated. The ladie Cordeilla hearing that he was arriued in poore estate, she first sent to him priuile a certeine summe

of monie to apparell himselfe withal, and to reteine a certein number of seruants that might attende vpon him in honorable wise, as appertained to the estate which he had borne: and then so accompanied, she appointed him to come to the court, which he did, and was so ioifullie, honorable, and louinglie receiued, both by his sonne in law Aganippus and also by his daughter Cordeilla, that his hart was greatlie comforted: for he was no lesse honored, than if he had beene king of the whole countrie himselfe.

'Now when he had informed his sonne in law and his daughter in what sort he had beene vsed by his other daughters, Aganippus caused a mightie armie to be put in readinesse, and likewise a greate nauie of ships to be rigged, to passe ouer into Britaine with Leir his father in law, to see him againe restored to his kingdome. It was accorded, that Cordeilla should also go with him to take possession of the land, the which he promised to leaue vnto hir, as the rightfull inheritour after his decesse, notwithstanding any former grant made to hir sisters or to their husbands in anie maner of wise.

'Herevpon, when this armie and nauie of ships were readie, Leir and his daughter Cordeilla with hir husband tooke the sea, and arriuing in Britaine, fought with their enimies, and discomfited them in battell, in the which Maglanus and Henninus were slaine: and then was Leir restored to his kingdome, which he ruled after this by the space of two yeeres, and then died, fortie yeeres after he first began to reigne. His bodie was buried at Leicester in a vault vnder the chanell of the riuier of Sore beneath the towne.

'Cordeilla the yongest daughter of Leir was admitted Q. and supreme gouernesse of Britaine, in the yeere of the world 3155, before the bylding of Rome 54, Vzia then reigning in Iuda, and Ieroboam ouer Israell. This Cordeilla after hir father's de-

ceasse ruled the land of Britaine right worthilie during the space of fve yeeres, in which meane time her husband died, and then about the end of those fve yeeres, hir two nephewes Margan and Cunedag, sonnes to hir aforesaid sisters, disdaining to be vnder the gouernment of a woman, leuied warre against hir, and destroyed a great part of the land, and finallie tooke hir prisoner, and laid hir fast in ward, where-with she tooke suche grieffe, being a woman of a manlie courage, and despairing to recouer libertie, there she slue hirselfe.'

In the old play, Cornwall is the husband of Goneril, and appears in a somewhat better light than Regan's consort; another reason, it seems to me, why Shakespeare may have taken his tragedy from this source rather than directly from Holinshed. But Shakespeare, as is indicated by the very first line of *King Lear*, deliberately made Goneril's husband a great and noble character, one of the finest gentlemen to be found among all his *dramatis personæ*; while Regan's husband has no redeeming features except energy and resolution. The Fool—one of the most remarkable among all Shakespeare's jesters—is another instance, if any were needed, of the dramatist's original creative power. Our respect for Shakespeare's genius is always heightened when we study his 'originals.' In this case, he took a melodramatic story with a 'happy ending,' and transformed it into a poignant tragedy, not merely of Lear, but of old age. It is perhaps the greatest tragedy to be found in any literature.

## APPENDIX B

### THE HISTORY OF THE PLAY

We are fortunate in being able to fix with some precision the date of the composition of *King Lear*. It was written between 1603 and 1606. Harsnet's *Popish Impostures*, to which reference is made in our Notes, and which Shakespeare surely used in writing this play, was published in 1608. Edgar, who sings a bit of an old ballad, 'I smell the blood of a British man,' may possibly have substituted 'British' for the more common earlier word, 'English.' King James was crowned in 1603, but he was proclaimed King of Great Britain 24 October, 1604. Furthermore Gloucester mentions 'these late eclipses in the sun and moon.' Now in October, 1605, there was an eclipse of the sun, preceded within the space of a month by an eclipse of the moon. The Stationers' Registers say the play had been performed by 26 December, 1606. Some scholars think it was written in 1604, others in 1605; but all that we can be sure of is that it was written after the beginning of the year 1603 and before the end of the year 1606.

The earliest known edition of *King Lear* appeared in 1608. Indeed, two separate Quartos bear that date. One of these, at the foot of the title-page, has the following statement: 'Printed for Nathaniel Butter, and are to be sold at his shop in Pauls Church-yard at the signe of the Pide Bull neere St. Austins Gate.' It has thus come to be known as the 'Pide Bull' Quarto. The other omits everything after the word 'Butter,' and is now regarded as a spurious edition, really printed about 1619. The next printing of the play was in the First Folio, 1623,



and in the Folios that followed in 1632, 1664, 1685. There was also a quarto edition of 1655, a reprint of the second Quarto mentioned above. Nearly three hundred lines appear in the Quartos that are not in the Folio, and about a hundred and ten lines in the Folio which are not in the Quartos. Delius thought that Shakespeare wrote only what is in the Folio, but there can be little doubt that the third scene in the fourth act, although wholly omitted in the Folio, is Shakespearian.

The first performance of the play, of which we have any record, was in the presence of the King at Whitehall, 26 December, 1606. In 1662 there is an allusion to *King Lear*, which seems to indicate that it was well known. In 1681 Nahum Tate made a revision which held the stage for a hundred and forty years, and was used by all the great eighteenth-century players. Edgar and Cordelia are united in marriage, and Kent and Lear live together. Tate's version seems insipid in comparison with Shakespeare's, but it was shaped to fit the fashion of the times. Tate paid a compliment to Shakespeare in his Prologue:

each Rustick knows  
 'Mongst plenteous Flow'rs a Garland to Compose,  
 Which strung by his course Hand may fairer Show,  
 But 'twas a Power Divine first made 'em Grow.

It was in 1828 that the great actor Edmund Kean, who had often appeared in Tate's version, finally decided to return to the original text, saying to his wife, 'The London audience have no notion of what I can do until they see me over the dead body of Cordelia.' The effect was even greater than he had hoped for. The most notable performance by an American actor in the nineteenth century was by Edwin Booth, who made an indelible impression on both critics and public. In the twentieth century, the

play has been produced frequently in Germany and occasionally in Paris, while the best-known American production is that by Mr. Robert Mantell, who deserves much praise for giving his contemporaries their only opportunity to see the tragedy. Still, there is much truth in what Charles Lamb said nearly a century ago: 'The Lear of Shakespeare cannot be acted . . . the play is beyond all art.'

## APPENDIX C

### THE TEXT OF THIS EDITION

In accordance with the plan of this series, and by permission of the Oxford Press, this text of *King Lear* is a reprint of Craig's Oxford Shakespeare, with the following changes, made after a comparison of Craig's text with the First Folio and Quarto texts:

(a) Extensive additions to the First Folio text are indicated by brackets.

(b) I have followed the stage directions of the First Folio, wherever practicable, necessary additional directions being enclosed in brackets.

(c) Minor changes have been made as follows:

II. ii. 36 whoreson, cullionly barber-monger *instead of*  
whoreson, cullionly, barber-monger

III. ii. 14 Spit fire! spout rain! *instead of* Spit, fire! spout,  
rain!

III. v. 22 fully.—I *instead of* fully. I

IV. i. 77 bear *instead of* bear;

IV. v. 25 œillades *instead of* œilliades

IV. vi. 139 naught *instead of* nought

V. iii. 24 good years *instead of* goujeres

V. iii. 184 burst! *instead of* burst,

V. iii. 254 thy *instead of* my (misprint)

Villainy, villainous *instead of* villany, villanous (*passim*)

## APPENDIX D

### SUGGESTIONS FOR COLLATERAL READING

S. T. Coleridge, *Notes and Lectures* (quoted in Furness).

Charles Lamb, *On the Tragedies of Shakspeare Considered with reference to their Fitness for Stage-Representation* (1812).

William Hazlitt, *Characters of Shakespear's Plays* (1817). (Reprinted in Everyman's Library.)

Charles Cowden Clarke, *Shakespeare-Characters* (1863).

H. H. Furness, *A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare*, Vol. v. *King Lear*, 1880.

Maurice Maeterlinck, 'King Lear' in *Paris (Fortnightly Review)*, February, 1905).

Charlotte Porter and Helen A. Clarke, "Folio" edition of *King Lear* (1905).

Ivan Turgenev, *A Lear of the Steppes*.

A. C. Bradley, *Shakespearean Tragedy* (1904).

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